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ABSTRACT

An evaluation assessed the effectiveness of the Skills Enhancement Training (SET) project that developed a partnership between an employee benefits trust fund and the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute. Data about the effectiveness of the partnership model, impact of the instructor training and technical assistance, and impact on workers were collected through interviews, observations of teacher training sessions, analysis of assessment data, and analysis of information on project forms. Conceived by a local cafeteria workers' union, SET offered instruction in reading, writing, math, problem solving, and communications competencies used in the cafeteria jobs. Participation in SET's educational partnership enhanced company and union awareness of basic skill needs in their industry. SET provided a model for education based within an industry. Analysis of Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System data and learners' comments showed quantitative gains in basic skills and qualitative gains. Instructors agreed the inservice training was needed and worthwhile and found the developed curriculum useful; they had difficulty grasping the nuances of the workplace and generating examples of context-based applications. Interview data indicated workers appreciated the opportunity to learn workplace-related skills. Recommendations were made concerning ongoing SET implementation, lessons for other educational partnerships, and federal technical assistance. (Appendixes list fund members and job classifications.) (YLB)

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Evaluation of the Skills Enhancement Training Program

Judith A. Alamprese
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Ann Kay
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& Associates, Inc.

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Prepared for the Food and Beverage Workers Union Local 32 &
Employers Benefits Fund under funding from the
U.S. Department of Education

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Preface

The Skills Enhancement Training (SET) project was established in 1990 as a workplace literacy demonstration program with funding from the U.S. Department of Education's National Workplace Literacy Program. The Food and Beverage Workers Union Local 32 & Employers Benefits Fund in Washington, D.C., a labor-management entity, was the grant recipient and administrator for SET. As required by the National Workplace Literacy Program, SET was designed as a partnership between organizations from the workplace and education. The joint Fund served as the workplace partner, and the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute was the education partner.

SET's goals were to provide a basic skills instructional program that taught workplace-related skills to employees and to demonstrate how education and work organizations could work together effectively in providing employees with an educational program. One component of the project was an external evaluation conducted by COSMOS Corporation and Ruttenberg, Kilgallon & Associates, Inc. This report presents the findings the evaluation of SET's workplace literacy program that operated during 1990-1991.

The evaluation's activities would not have been possible without the generous support and cooperation of the following: SET's director, assistant director, instructors, and other staff; the union president; the members of the joint Fund; participating employers; and staff from the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute and the AFL-CIO Education Department. We are grateful for the assistance that was provided by these individuals and organizations. Special thanks also are given to workers participating in SET who willingly shared their experiences and thoughts about the program in interviews with members of the evaluation team.

Finally, while we are thankful for the assistance provided by others, the authors alone are responsible for the contents of this report.

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Skills Enhancement Training project was established in 1990 as a workplace literacy demonstration program with funding from the U.S. Department of Education's National Workplace Literacy Program (NWLP). A labor-management entity, the Food and Beverage Workers Union Local 32 & Employers Benefits Fund in Washington, D.C., was the grant recipient and administrator for the Skills Enhancement Training (SET) project, which was designed to serve cafeteria workers who were members of the union. As required by the National Workplace Literacy Program, SET was designed as a partnership between organizations from education and the workplace. The joint Fund served as the workplace partner for the grant. The education partner was the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute (HRDI).

As a workplace literacy project, SET's goal was to provide a basic skills instructional program that taught workplace-related skills to employees in the service industry. Another goal of the project was to demonstrate how education and work organizations could join together to provide workers with an effective educational experience. To assess SET's success in meeting these goals, the project included in its design an independent evaluation component. The evaluators, who were subcontractors to the Fund, were COSMOS Corporation and Ruttenberg, Kilgallon & Associates, Inc. COSMOS Corporation had responsibility for evaluating the operation of the project's instructional program, and Ruttenberg, Kilgallon & Associates, Inc. assessed the implementation of the partnership model.

This report presents the findings from the evaluation of SET's workplace literacy project that operated during 1990-1991. Discussed in this section of the report are the approach and methodology that were used to carry out the evaluation. Also described are the remaining sections of the report.

Evaluation Approach

Since SET was a demonstration project that involved the development of a partnership between education and work organizations and the implementation of an instructional program, the objective of the evaluation was to collect information concerning SET's effectiveness in carrying out these goals and to identify components of the project that might require modification. The evaluation approach took into consideration an assumption underlying

demonstration projects—that services are developed with the aim of creating program models and it is likely that not all aspects of a project will be effective as first designed. The evaluation was designed on the premise that the process of model building is iterative, whereby the components of a project should be examined during the demonstration period to identify which achieve the expected results and which need to be adjusted or revised to meet the desired outcomes. This process of review and adjustment is integral to a demonstration project and critical to the development of an effective program model.

The approach used in designing the evaluation of SET was to gather information about each of the project's components to determine the aspects of the program that were effective and those needing modification. This design required both formative and summative data collection activities in order to document the processes used to implement the components of the project as well as the outcomes achieved from the project's activities. The following processes and outcomes were examined in the evaluation:

- The processes used to carry out the partnership involving the union and employers who participated in the Benefits Fund (workplace partner), and HRDI (education partner);

- The impact of training and technical assistance activities on teachers' implementation of the instructional program; and

- The impact of workers' participation in the project on their improvement of basic skills, application of these skills to workplace tasks, and their perceived change in self-efficacy.

The evaluation also examined the overall effectiveness of the project's model, including curriculum design and customization, organization of the instructional program, and project management.

Evaluation Methodology

In developing the methodology for the evaluation, the research team examined each project component and activity to identify the instruments and data collection activities that would be the most appropriate for gathering quantitative and qualitative data about the project's implementation process and

outcomes. The instruments and data collection activities are described for each of the processes and outcomes that were examined.

Development of the Partnership. The primary methods for collecting data about the effectiveness of the project's partnership model were face-to-face interviews with representatives of the two partners, as well as participation in meetings held by the members of the partnership and by project staff. A member of the research team conducted face-to-face interviews with individual employer representatives during the final months of the project to determine the following: 1) employers' assessment of the implementation of the project, 2) changes in employers' attitudes about worker training as a result of the project, and 3) suggestions for furthering the involvement of the employer in the partnership. Interviews averaged one hour in length. Similar information on the participation of the union and HRDI was obtained through interviews with representatives from both of those organizations.

A research team member also participated in three group meetings of members of the partnership. Issues discussed during these meetings included grant administration, worker recruitment, schedule of the instructional program, and the payment of the bonus to workers who completed the instructional program. This team member also observed two meetings of the joint board of the Fund at which the company and union trustees made decisions on how the partners would conduct and oversee the project. The team member met with the Fund's accounting and legal consultants to discuss issues applicable when a joint employee benefits entity, like the Fund, serves as a federal grant recipient. Finally, the team member observed the two project graduations and several project staff meetings, and met with the instructional staff to collect information concerning the influence of the location of classes (i.e., in workplace or union hall) on the delivery of the instructional program.

Effects of Instructor Training. Three methods were used to gather information about the impact of the training and technical assistance that was provided to instructors. The methods were: 1) face-to-face interviews with instructors, 2) observations of teacher training sessions, and 3) review of assessment instruments and individualized educational plans prepared by the instructors for SET participants. These data collection activities were designed to determine the extent to which the instructors implemented the project's curriculum and assessment procedures as specified in the project's training and to collect information about areas of training and technical assistance requiring modification.

Two members of the research team conducted face-to-face interviews with the project's instructors during the final month of the instructional program. The interviews were approximately one hour in length. An interview protocol was developed and the following topics were discussed during the interviews:

- Background information concerning instructors' prior experience with union and workplace literacy programs;
- Processes used by instructors in administering the project's assessment procedures and in teaching workplace-related skills;
- Problems experienced by instructors in carrying out the instructional program;
- Instructors' observations concerning the impact of the program on workers; and
- Recommendations for improving teacher training and programmatic activities.

A research team member also observed a number of the teacher training sessions to collect information about the staff development strategies that were used by the project's staff and the instructors' reactions to these strategies. The final data collection activity undertaken for this component of the evaluation was the review of the assessment instruments completed by instructors and the individualized education plans that they prepared for workers. The examinations of assessment instruments was intended to reveal the extent to which the instruments were administered properly, and the review of the plans was undertaken to determine the quality of the learning recommendations that were given to SET participants.

Impact on Workers. Three data collection methods were used to examine the impact of the project on workers. The first was an analysis of the assessment data that was collected from workers. This included an analysis of the pre- and post-test results from the administration of the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System's Employability Competency System (ECS), and an analysis of the results from the administration of the six applied performance assessment items that were developed by COSMOS Corporation for the project. Both types of instruments measure the application of basic skills to workplace-related tasks. The ECS is an instrument that includes general measures of workplace tasks and

uses a multiple-choice format. The applied performance test items developed for the project were measures of workplace tasks specific to the hospitality industry and included open-ended as well as close-ended questions.

The second data collection method was the conduct of face-to-face interviews with a sample of SET participants from each of the instructional sites. Two research team members conducted 37 interviews with workers during the final month of project classes. These interviews were approximately 30 minutes in length. An interview protocol was developed and the following topics were discussed in the interviews:

- Background information concerning participants' work experience and their participation in educational programs;
- Workers' experience participating in SET, including what they learned from the program, their appraisal of the assessment techniques, teaching methodologies and materials that were used, their completion of homework assignments, and their assessment of the instructor;
- Workers' suggestions for improving the instructional program; and
- Workers' perceptions of the impact of the program on the improvement of their basic skills, their ability to use these skills in the workplace, and of the ways in which their lives in their families and in the community were enhanced.

The final data collection activity was an analysis of information collected from SET participants on the project's registration, intake, and exit forms. The review of the registration form permitted an analysis of the demographic characteristics of project participants. As another measure of the impact of the program on workers, data that were collected from workers upon their entry into and exit from the program were analyzed. In particular, questions concerning workers' goals were examined on the intake form and their perceptions of the impact of the program and future plans for education were analyzed from the project exit form.

Overall Program Effectiveness. In order to assess the overall operations of the project, the research team reviewed the curriculum materials that were developed and customized to the workplace. The team also had extensive discussions with the project staff to monitor the ongoing progress of the project's activities. As a final data collection activity to determine the support of the project from the workplace, the research team conducted telephone and face-to-face interviews with nine supervisors of SET participants. During these interviews, the team collected information about supervisors' knowledge of SET and the extent to which they had observed changes in SET participants' behavior in the workplace that could be attributable to SET.

Overview of the Report

Section II of the report describes the development of the partnership that was created for SET, the types of workers who participated in the project, and the operation of SET's instructional program. Presented in Section III is a discussion of the implementation of SET's partnership model, and Section IV presents the findings from this implementation. Described in Section V are the results from SET's instructional program, including the findings from a review of the instructor training component, an analysis of the impact of the program on participants, and an assessment of the overall operation of the project. Section VI presents recommendations for developing and carrying out workplace literacy programs that involve a partnership of education and work organizations.

II. DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

"Your program is a model for labor-management cooperation in coming to grips with the increasing educational demands on today's workforce."
— Augustus Hawkins, Chair (retired)
House Education and Labor Committee
Statement at SET's First Graduation

The union and employers of some 1,800 cafeteria workers in the Washington, D.C. area were involved in SET's workplace-based education project. This section describes the structure and operations of the project: the organizations that conducted the SET program, the workers and industry that it targeted, the matching support it received, its classes and participants, and its instructional program.

A. The Partners in the NWLP Grant

The grant recipient and administrator of this literacy project was a labor-management entity: an employee benefits trust fund, created previously by the cafeteria workers' union and employers to jointly administer education programs and other employee benefits that the employers and union had established through collective bargaining. The name of this joint entity is the Food and Beverage Workers Union Local 32 & Employers Benefits Fund; it is referred to hereafter as the Fund. Appendix A contains a summary description of the members of the Fund.

The workers' union and employers, as members of the joint Fund, participated on an equal basis in the design and operation of the project.

As required for the National Workplace Literacy Program, SET's design was based on a partnership between organizations from the workplace and education. The joint Fund served as the workplace partner. The education partner was the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute.

HRDI is a national employment and training organization with recognized expertise in workplace literacy. As the national employment and training arm of

the labor movement, HRDI had taken an early leadership role prior to this grant in developing strategies for enhancing basic skills in the workplace.

Launched in April 1990, the $338,580 program was initially planned to run 18 months. A no-cost extension of the NWLP grant carried the program an additional three months, through December 1991. Non-federal money contributed from the joint employee benefits Fund sustained SET at a reduced level of activity for a three-month interim period between the end of the first grant and the start of a new one in April 1992.

B. The Targeted Workers and Their Industry

The Cafeteria Workers and Their Jobs

SET was conceived by a local cafeteria workers' union—Food and Beverage Workers Union, Local 32—as an educational benefit for its members in the Washington, D.C., area. The union, an affiliate of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union, AFL-CIO, represents about 3,000 food service workers, of whom some 60 percent are in the Washington area and the remainder in Richmond, Norfolk, and Williamsburg, VA.

The union's members work at food service establishments in over 60 federal agencies and private institutions in the Washington, D.C., area. Their jobs range from entry-level positions such as utility worker or bus person, to experienced positions such as head floor cashier or lead cook. Their wages vary by occupation and employer; at the time the grant began, their hourly wages ranged generally from six to nine dollars with an average of about $7.50. Appendix B, "Job Classifications," presents a list of the cafeteria jobs at a typical cafeteria site. The industry lacks any real career ladders, although promotions occasionally occur from entry jobs to more skilled positions.

Performance of these cafeteria jobs requires a range of literacy skills: reading recipe measurements, calculating recipe conversions, reading cleaning solvent labels, making change, working effectively in a team, training fellow workers, and responding to customer inquiries from the government officials, legislators, tourists, students, and others using the facilities every day. High school diplomas or the equivalent are required for many of the career advancement opportunities in the industry.

Although the union and companies do not maintain data on workers' educational levels, focus groups conducted prior to the grant indicated that many

had not completed high school; even those who said they had finished high school reported instances where inadequate basic skills held them back in their jobs and their personal lives.

A majority of the union's members are African American, including a high percentage of women and many workers with 20 or more years' seniority in their jobs. A smaller but growing number are immigrants from Latin America, Africa, and other parts of the world, often possessing limited literacy in English. Many, with their disadvantaged backgrounds and lack of skills, are barely a step removed from the working poor.

The Food Service Companies

SET's targeted workers were employed at the 13 Washington-area food service companies that had collective bargaining agreements with Local 32 and were members of its joint employee benefits Fund. During the grant period, these signatory companies were:

- ARA Services, Inc.
- Canteen Food and Vending Service Corporation
- Carlson Foods (now Twenty One Hundred Corporation)
- DAKA Food Service Management, Inc.
- Gardner Merchant
- Guest Services, Inc.
- Harbor Square Condominiums
- Macro Service Systems, Inc.
- Marriott Corporation
- Ogden Allied Food Service
- Refractory Cafeteria at the Government Printing Office
- Seilers Dining Service Management
- Service America Corporation

These employers are food service contractors that operate eating facilities on the premises of government agencies, museums, universities, and other organizations. As food service contractors, these companies routinely compete with one another to do business with government agencies or other organizations. What they have in common that enabled them to cooperate in SET is their relationship with Local 32 and their participation in the multi-company employee benefits Fund.

The companies participating in the Fund during the grant period ranged in size from independent small businesses to the regional branches of large national corporations. The majority of the Washington-area members of Local 32 were employed at five of the larger companies: Guest Services, ARA, Canteen, Service America, and Marriott. At each of these five organizations, the number of union members during the grant period ranged from about 250 to 700. The union's smaller employers had as few as a dozen union workers on their payroll.

Each of these participating employers operates cafeterias, restaurants, or snack bars that are located at government agencies such as the Pentagon, Smithsonian, State Department, Labor Department, and U.S. Capitol, as well as universities and other institutions. At a typical government agency with one cafeteria, a food service contractor employs 20 to 25 hourly workers who are members of Local 32, and up to eight supervisory staff who are not union members. Some agencies have many times this number of food service workers at multiple eating facilities. Universities often have four or more cafeterias, dining rooms, and snack bars, so their workforce typically includes 90 to 125 hourly workers and two dozen or more non-union supervisors.

The workers at these companies who were eligible for SET were those who were represented by Local 32 and worked in the Washington area. These workers comprised just one segment of the companies' workforce, however. Ten of the 13 employers were nationwide firms that had other regions or divisions that were beyond the scope of SET.

C. Matching Support for SET

The companies, union, and their joint Fund each made contributions to SET to meet the NWLP matching requirement. The contributions consisted primarily of in-kind donations of personnel, equipment, and facilities and also included cash payments for a training bonus.

Local 32 provided office space for the project staff and contributed considerable goods and services. The union president spent time overseeing the staff, in his capacity as a trustee of the Fund, and he and other union staff facilitated the implementation of SET through their regular contacts with participating employers. Union representatives also helped publicize the program through union meetings and in individual contacts with union members.

From the employers came the $200 training bonus for each employee who completed SET classes satisfactorily. The employers also actively worked with project staff to secure classroom space and other teaching resources, as well as to recruit learners and minimize any obstacles or disincentives for their participation, such as conflicting work schedules. The company-hosted graduation ceremonies granted recognition to the workers who completed the program and helped publicize SET more widely within the industry.

The Fund's contributions included 12 personal computers and six printers purchased for the learning lab used by SET participants at the union hall. After the end of the first NWLP grant, the Fund made monies available to maintain the program at a reduced level for an interim three-month period, pending the receipt of a second NWLP grant.

D. SET Classes and Participants

Overview of SET Classes

SET's classes offered instruction in reading, writing, math, problem solving, and communications competencies used in the cafeteria jobs. Realia from the workplace complemented standard texts as teaching material. While separate English-as-a-second-language (ESL) classes were not offered, non-native students with moderate English-language proficiency were scheduled into SET classes.

The 72-hour classes were held after work at company sites convenient to where the learners worked, or on Saturdays at the union hall and company sites. SET's pilot class took place in summer-fall 1990, followed by three full class cycles in fall-winter 1990, winter-spring 1991, and spring-summer 1991. The pilot class served as a laboratory for developing the curriculum, which was further refined during the first full cycle. SET responded to worker interests and industry needs by integrating computers into the basic skills instructional methodology, leading to a 16-hour computer-based component that was piloted as part of the curriculum in cycle three. To take advantage of additional time under the grant after completion of the three cycles, SET ran a shorter "extension" cycle in fall 1991. Of SET's 19 classes, 16 were regular 72-hour courses and three were shorter extension classes.

In addition to providing instruction, SET sought to assist workers in attaining longer-term educational goals through the provision of educational counseling. SET helped interested individuals to identify affordable educational resources in the community or through the union and company, such as the

tuition reimbursement program established in 1988 by Local 32 and participating employers.

Participants

A total of 104 cafeteria workers completed the program with at least 80 percent attendance and were entitled to a $200 training bonus, paid by their companies. Another 87 workers either completed the regular SET classes without meeting the attendance requirements for a bonus, or completed the shorter classes at the end of the grant period, for which no bonus was offered. Thirty-two completers wanted more education and went through a second (or third) SET class or a pilot pre-GED course.

Table II-1 presents a summary of the demographic characteristics of the 191 workers who participated in SET. The majority were African American women who had completed ten or more years of education. Half of the participants were 45 years or younger, and almost half had been employed by their companies less than five years.

SET's participants attended classes at nine different locations, with the Library of Congress and the Pentagon serving the most workers. The figures in the table concerning the enrollment at these sites reflect the total number of workers attending classes at each site, including the 32 workers who participated in more than one class.

Participants attended class after working hours, often at the end of a workday that began at 6 a.m. Participants who made the commitment to attend classes also were committing to a long day that might require traveling to class at another building and going home after dark in high crime neighborhoods.

E. SET's Instructional Program

In implementing SET's instructional program, the staff carried out extensive curriculum development and teacher-training activities to assure that the program would meet the needs of the cafeteria workers for whom it was intended. Discussed below are the curriculum development, implementation, and assessment activities undertaken as part of SET, learner recruitment and counseling methods, the selection and ongoing training of instructional staff, and the dissemination activities that were conducted.

TABLE II-1

Characteristics of SET Participants

Characteristic	Number	Percent (%)
Gender	(N = 191)	
Male	54	28
Female	137	72
Race/Ethnicity		
African American	170	89
Asian/Pacific Islander	2	1
Hispanic	12	6
White	4	2
Other	3	2
Age		
16-25 years	17	9
26-35 years	46	24
36-45 years	43	23
46-55 years	27	14
56 years or older	20	10
Unknown	38	20
Years of Education		
9 years or less	26	14
10-11 years	59	31
12 years	71	37
13 years or more	9	4
Unknown	26	14

(Continued on next page)

Table II-1 (Continued)

Characteristic	Number	Percent (%)
Years Employed by Company	(N=191)	
5 years or less	77	40
6-10 years	24	13
11-15 years	15	8
16 years or more	37	19
Unknown	38	20
Participants Served at Each Site	(N=223)	
American University	12	5
Annex II	11	5
Department of Agriculture	12	5
Department of Interior	26	12
Department of Labor	29	13
George Washington University	18	8
Library of Congress	60	27
Pentagon	36	16
Union Hall	19	9

Curriculum and Assessment Materials

Curriculum Development. SET program staff engaged in a number of curriculum design activities during the initial months of the project to customize workplace materials to the hospitality industry and to identify published materials that were appropriate for use in SET classes. The staff began with the assumption that a competency-based approach to basic skills instruction would be an effective method for identifying learning objectives, context-based instructional materials, and learner assessment instruments. As a first step in developing a competency-based curriculum, SET staff performed workplace analyses of the tasks required for the positions of cook, cashier, production worker, utility worker, and waiter/waitress. These were the positions that the staff thought would be held by workers most in need of SET's program. SET staff conducted focus groups and interviews with workers and with union and company personnel to collect information about the level of basic skills and types of workplace tasks required for these positions. They also observed workers performing their jobs to ascertain the ways in which basic skills were being used on the job. The task analysis process, which involved extensive documentation and analysis of skills and workplace tasks, was carried out over a three-month period.

A key component of the task analysis process was the involvement of workers, which was facilitated by the union. The project's educational partner, HRDI, also assisted by reviewing materials and providing technical expertise as needed.

SET staff used the information gathered in the task analyses to develop a comprehensive curriculum that emphasized the application of basic skills in a context-based format. The curriculum included 21 competencies in the areas of reading, writing, mathematics, problem solving, and communications. These competencies reflected skills used in the hospitality industry. SET's competencies were identified through the task analysis process as well as from materials provided by the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS). Realia from the workplace, such as recipe cards, work schedules, personnel manuals, and union contracts, also were incorporated into the instructional lessons created as part of the curriculum. In addition to developing materials, SET staff reviewed commercially-published instructional materials to identify workbooks and reading materials that could be integrated into the curriculum.

The curriculum was pilot-tested in a class taught by SET's program director to assess the usefulness and validity of the competencies, the workplace materials, and the exercises that were part of the instructional lessons. Based on the information collected during the pilot class, the competencies, exercises, and

materials were revised and combined to form the curriculum guide. The guide was designed for use in multi-level classes and consisted of a format that allowed for the addition of materials and exercises as appropriate.

Curriculum Implementation. Instructors were trained to use the curriculum guide and materials. Detailed information about readings and exercises appropriate for each of SET's competencies was discussed with instructors during inservice training sessions. Particular emphasis was placed on the application of basic skills to tasks required in the cafeteria workplace. As a method of counseling learners and organizing the instructional program, instructors prepared individual learning plans (ILP) for SET participants upon their entry into the program. Instructors met with learners regularly to discuss both their short-term learning goals and their longer-term educational and employment objectives.

Learner Assessment. The SET program utilized a system of competency-based assessment measures to ascertain the development of participants' skills. In addition to formal assessment measures, instructors collected information about learners' progress through observations and the review of learner dialogue journals.

CASAS's Employability Competency System (ECS) was used to pre- and post-test SET participants. CASAS/ECS was selected because it is competency-based, workplace-related, and free of cultural bias. The ECS consists of an appraisal test, and pre- and post-tests in reading and mathematics at three levels of proficiency (A, B, and C). During SET's intake process, workers were given the appraisal test to determine their reading and mathematics proficiency and to identify the level of the ECS pre-test that should be given. Instructors administered the pre-test during the first week of class and the post-test at the conclusion of a class. The three levels of ECS pre- and post-tests assessed workplace-related competencies in reading and mathematics.

In order to assess SET participants' acquisition of specific workplace competencies, six applied performance assessment items were developed and pilot tested during the second cycle of the project. These items were designed to assess reading, problem solving, writing, and communication skills used in the cafeteria workplace and incorporated realia from this environment. The competencies and performances assessed by these items were the following:

- Read and interpret specific information from written materials (2 items)—interpret information on an employment application and on a union agreement;

- Solve problems and arrive at decisions independently—orally discuss a problem, three plausible solutions, the advantages and disadvantages of each, and the solution thought to be most effective;

- Writing: Fill out application forms—complete an application form for a cafeteria job;

- Communications: Identify general standards and procedures for personal hygiene—read information about a company's dress code and write responses to open-ended questions about the company's dress code policy; and

- Write: Write a short descriptive paragraph—write a paragraph of up to six sentences concerning plans for the future.

The use of formal assessment procedures was supplemented by instructors' collection of information from SET participants through the completion of dialogue journals and staff interviews with participants. Learners wrote in dialogue journals and submitted them weekly to their instructors. Topics for the journals included learners' reactions to class assignments, discussions of work situations, and plans for future work and training. The instructors read the journal entries and commented on the content of what learners wrote, rather than on the accuracy of the grammar and spelling. This approach was taken to encourage learners' written expression of ideas in a situation that was not punitive. The instructors also kept journals about their teaching experiences that they submitted to the SET staff.

Another assessment strategy used by SET staff was to conduct exit interviews with participants at the conclusion of each course. Through these interviews, staff were able to gather information about participants' perceptions and experiences that they used in the ongoing refinement of the program.

Recruitment and Learner Counseling

Participant recruitment was an ongoing process conducted throughout SET. Methods used to enlist learners included focus group and individual meetings held during the task analysis process and throughout the project to attract workers to SET. Educational and career counseling also was undertaken as part of the recruitment process.

A critical component of the recruitment process was the assistant director's work at the cafeteria sites meeting with union and company representatives. As a former business agent for Local 32, she was trusted and respected by both labor and management. This relationship enhanced her access to worksites and enabled SET staff to make repeated visits to the cafeterias to speak with prospective participants individually and as a group.

Union shop stewards and business agents also helped to recruit learners by posting flyers, and SET staff made presentations at quarterly union meetings. Some of the companies also distributed flyers announcing classes and encouraging workers' participation.

SET staff provided educational counseling to workers during program intake interviews that were held with each individual, and on the occasions that workers' performance on the ECS pre-test indicated that another program would be a better educational match. During the intake interviews, workers discussed their educational goals and staff helped to clarify these goals and set a course of study for workers to attain the goals. When workers "tested-out" of the program, SET staff provided referrals to appropriate learning settings.

Description of Project Staff

The NWLP grant provided for a full-time program director, a full-time assistant director, and a part-time program assistant, as well as 2,511 hours of instructor time. The director and assistant director brought complementary education and workplace perspectives to the project. Thus, the NWLP partnership between education and the workplace carried through to SET's staff structure.

Directing the project was a professional educator with strong experience in adult literacy education and nontraditional instruction. The program director coordinated all curriculum and instructional activities and had primary responsibility for the operation of the program.

The assistant director, in addition to being a former business agent for Local 32, had previous labor education experience. She brought to the project her knowledge of the industry as well as her rapport with the targeted workers and her established relationships with the company representatives whose cooperation was essential to the program. The assistant director had the lead responsibility for liaison with the union and employers; she also carried out learner recruitment and counseling.

The part-time program assistant provided support in office and clerical activities, recordkeeping, and curriculum development. As a former member of the union staff, she also was familiar with the industry and its workers.

Nine experienced adult educators were hired on an hourly basis to teach SET's classes. Reflecting the recent emergence of workplace literacy as a teaching specialty, only two had worked in that field before. Lacking a field of candidates with workplace literacy experience, SET sought adult educators with experience in other nontraditional educational settings, such as community-based organizations.

The staff provided ongoing in-service training to the teachers—generally for two hours, twice a month at the union hall—to help them master the new teaching approaches being tested in the program. The 64 hours of train-the-teacher sessions began in September 1990 prior to cycle one and continued through the end of cycle three in August 1991. Initial training for instructors was focused on the administration of the CASAS/ECS assessment instruments and on the theory of competency-based adult education. To address the instructors' lack of experience in workplace literacy, subsequent training dealt with the preparation of lesson plans, the operation of the union, organization of the cafeteria workplace, and the application of reading, writing, mathematics, problem solving, and communications skills in the workplace. In addition to these semi-monthly meetings, the program director held monthly meetings with each instructor to discuss the results of classroom observations and to solicit comments from instructors. The program director also reviewed instructors' journals during these meetings, and provided general feedback about performance.

The instructor-training sessions were a critical component of SET and provided a mechanism for ongoing discussion among program and instructional staff. Information also was collected during these sessions about the progress of learners and factors affecting their participation.

Dissemination Activities

SET staff carried out a variety of dissemination activities early in the grant period as a means of informing others about union-based workplace literacy programs and to stimulate the continuing interest of labor and management. One factor that facilitated SET's dissemination activities was the involvement of HRDI, which arranged for SET staff to participate in its ongoing technical assistance activities for training and education projects across the country. Staff from the AFL-CIO's Education Department also identified dissemination opportunities for SET and provided ongoing support for the effort.

SET staff made numerous presentations at national and regional conferences about the development and implementation of a union-based workplace literacy program. They also provided information that was used in newspapers, newsletters, and other print media. A key dissemination activity was SET's featured role in the Jobs 2000 Teleconference sponsored by Nabisco and Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) in March 1991.

An important event held twice during the grant period was a graduation ceremony that honored SET graduates and their families. Representatives from the union, companies, educational partner, the project's evaluators, U.S. Department of Education, and the U.S. Congress came together to validate workers' efforts to enhance the quality of their lives through skill development.

III. CENTERED IN THE UNION AND INDUSTRY: DESCRIPTION OF SET'S EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

"Our obligation is to help our members in every way we can to improve their lives. Education opens the door to good jobs."

— President of participating union

"Human resources have emerged as a prime asset; in effect getting the very best individual effort out of everyone on the team."

— Vice president of participating company

In SET's partnership, the workplace partner provides the primary program leadership and the education partner furnishes technical expertise—reversing the roles often seen in NWLP projects. This section describes, first, the key factors in the formation of the partnership; second, the partners' respective goals and expectations for the project; and third, the contributions each organization made to SET's partnership.

A. Key Elements in Forming the Partnership

As seen in this overview of the formation of the partnership, the union and employers participating in the cafeteria workers' joint Fund had reached a broad agreement on educational goals before they started SET. In their collective bargaining agreements, Local 32 and the companies had expressed their shared commitment to education. They had a history of cooperating in educational services through their privately financed joint benefits Fund. This experience had given the labor-management members of the Fund two key things they needed for embarking on workplace literacy: a shared commitment to education, and the joint structure necessary to cooperate in a new project. For help in translating their educational goals into a workplace-based learning program, they turned to HRDI, their education partner.

Political Issues in a Joint Program

The concept of joint labor-management education programs has always been a politically sensitive one. Labor and management inherently have differing needs and interests. Some critics of joint programs argue that companies and unions have to compromise their legitimate interests in order to participate in these programs, and that jointness thus prevents the company and the union from being effective advocates for their respective positions. Supporters of joint programs contend that neither side has to compromise its basic positions if the joint program focuses only on areas where the two sides have mutual goals. That way, the joint program gives the company and union a way to advance those defined areas of mutual interest, even though they continue to differ on other issues that are dealt with through collective bargaining. Contrary to the notion that joint programs represent weakness on the part of one or both partners, experience suggests that it is the strong unions and strong employers that are most likely to work successfully together in a joint setting (see, for example, Cohen-Rosenthal and Burton, 1987).

The relationship among the Fund's members reflected some of the textbook characteristics that enable joint programs to work effectively. The union and employers' mutual goals for SET were well-defined, in part through their collective bargaining agreements on education programs, in part through the rules and by-laws governing the Fund itself, and in part through the agreed-upon objectives stated in the SET grant.

Another characteristic of their relationship was that the companies and union acknowledged and respected one another as adversaries, even though they also recognized that they could work together on their joint education projects. "We're not at opposite ends of the spectrum on this [the SET project]," one management trustee of the Fund said in an evaluation interview. This company representative expressed doubts that SET would have come about at all if the employers had not viewed the union as a strong organization. The companies and union maintained friendly working relationships in the area of worker education, while they continued to differ on other labor-management issues where company and union interests inherently diverged.

Building on Their Past Education Programs

During the late 1980s, negotiations between the union and the food service employers had given rise to an array of jointly sponsored education programs, paid from private funds. By 1991 these included a tuition reimbursement program for union members, covering up to $1,000 annually in college or technical institute costs; a culinary arts scholarship enabling members to train as

chefs; and a college scholarship program for members' children or grandchildren paying up to $2,000 a year.

The union and companies, through their collective bargaining agreements, set up the joint Fund in 1987 to administer the jointly sponsored education programs as well as other negotiated health and welfare benefits. The Fund is a Taft Hartley trust that also meets the federal requirements for employee welfare plans under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA). It is classified as a voluntary employees beneficiary association under the Internal Revenue code. These laws and the Fund's by-laws ensure that it serves the interests of the covered workers.

The Fund is governed by a board of five union and four employer trustees; the local union president has chaired the board since its inception, while a management representative holds the office of secretary. The union's larger employers have tended to be the most regularly active on the board. (A smaller company that served on the board at SET's inception left the Fund before the project got underway because it lost its contract at the cafeteria represented by the union.) The board members generally work well together because of their common purpose, according to union and company representatives. This is true despite the differing interests represented on the board by labor and management and by the member companies themselves, who compete with one another in a tight market.

The negotiated education programs administered by the Fund are supported from contributions under the collective bargaining agreements between Local 32 and each employer. Instead of taking an additional number of cents per hour in wages, the union asked each employer to direct that amount into a joint education fund. The contributions began at a penny an hour and were later increased by joint agreement to three cents for each hour worked. Thus, for each hour worked by any employee covered by the collective bargaining agreement, three cents are set aside to finance educational and training programs for all members. The three cents add up to about $100,000 of the Fund's $1,160,000 annual income. (Contributions for other employee benefits, such as medical, dental, optical, and legal assistance, make up the rest.)

In its contributory structure, this fund resembles some of the well-known national joint education programs, such as the ones established by the Auto Workers with the big three U.S. auto makers; the Communications Workers with AT&T; and the Steelworkers with major American steel companies.

The education objectives established by the union and employers were consistent with other workforce policies that they had agreed on through collective bargaining. Their philosophy of employee retention, promotion, and

job security contrasted with the high-turnover, contingent workforce policies often seen in the food service industry.

Workplace Literacy As a New Priority

Local 32 and the food service companies used their privately funded negotiated education programs as a starting point for entering the field of workplace literacy.

Early in 1989, the leadership of Local 32 set basic skills education as a new union priority. After discussions with a local university did not lead to a satisfactory program, Local 32 approached the AFL-CIO Education Department and the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute for guidance on proceeding with its basic skills initiative. The outcome of those discussions was the decision by Local 32 and its participating employers to seek a National Workplace Literacy Program grant from the U.S. Department of Education. They determined that their joint organization, the Fund, would be the workplace partner required by the grant.

This was the first time the Fund had turned to public monies for any of its education programs. The Fund's trustees endorsed the grant application in the fall of 1989 on behalf of all of the companies participating in the Fund, and in early 1990 the grant was awarded. The grant created a new educational option for the members of the union—basic skills enhancement—to complement the privately funded education programs already offered by the Fund.

The Nontraditional Educational Partner

The Fund chose the AFL-CIO Human Resources Development Institute as its educational partner because of HRDI's knowledge of workplace-based education. HRDI assisted the union and companies in framing their project's educational approach and developing their own educational capabilities.

Ties to a more traditional educational institution might have been important if SET's immediate educational goals were to help workers obtain a General Educational Development (GED) diploma or postsecondary degree. But that was not the case with this project, where it was anticipated that workers would need considerable skill enhancement before pursuing a GED or higher education. For SET, the foremost need was felt to be an education partner that could help create a learning environment outside a traditional school setting.

As the employment and training arm of the AFL-CIO, HRDI was responsible for encouraging innovative union-involved approaches to job-related

training and education. Over its 23-year history, it had assisted unions and employers in virtually all industries to design programs for a wide range of needs: entry-level training, skill upgrading, retraining for displaced workers, preapprentice training, and workplace literacy programs. To test new approaches, HRDI occasionally operated pilot and demonstration programs.

In 1989, when Local 32 sought HRDI's advice on basic skills education, HRDI was engaged in identifying exemplary approaches to workplace literacy, with support from a U.S. Department of Labor research and demonstration grant. HRDI's research strongly pointed to worker involvement as the feature that the most effective workplace-based education programs shared in common.

That finding was consistent with other analyses then appearing in print, which were raising awareness among educational policy-makers regarding unions' role in workplace-based education. For example, the American Society for Training and Development, in a 1988 report, called attention to the importance of involving workers and their unions in the design and delivery of workplace literacy services: "Without employee concurrence and cooperation, the workplace basics program will never leave the launching pad" (Carnevale, Gainer, Meltzer, 1988). Education programs jointly sponsored by unions and their employers were cited as models in numerous studies and reports (see, for example, Chisman and Campbell, 1990; U.S. Departments of Labor and Education, 1988; and Business Council for Effective Literacy, 1987).

From its analysis of successful literacy programs, HRDI had derived both practical and theoretical knowledge of best-practice approaches. At the time Local 32 approached HRDI, HRDI was in the process of publishing its findings in a workplace literacy manual (Sarmiento and Kay, 1990).

In sharing its knowledge about basic skills education, HRDI initially aided Local 32 in developing a conceptual framework for the basic skills services that the union had identified as an educational priority. Later, working with the union and company representatives designated by the officers of the Fund, HRDI participated in the planning and design of the NWLP project, helping to develop an educational program based within the industry and union.

From its national perspective, HRDI also assisted the members of the Fund to put forward their partnership as a model for other companies and unions concerned about basic skills enhancement. The Fund looked to HRDI, with its extensive networks in the training and education field, to help disseminate the findings from SET.

B. Partners' Goals and Expectations for the Project

Driving each party's participation in the workplace literacy project were its own distinct—and sometimes divergent—organizational goals. Differences in organizational goals were evident not only between the union and employers but also among the various companies represented in the Fund. Still other organizational goals were voiced by HRDI, the education partner. One of the functions that the Fund performed in this project, as a joint entity, was to bring unity to these goals. This section discusses the partners' expectations.

Goals Expressed by Members of the Fund

Whether labor or management, the members of the Fund saw SET first as a vehicle by which their organization could help individual workers to improve their lives. This was consistent with the mission of the Fund, which was worker-centered by law, and with the goals of the NWLP grant. But as might be expected, their motivations for participating were more complex than that and reflected additional priorities and goals, which differed among the various members of the Fund.

On the labor side, education had traditionally been considered a union issue. Calling education "a benefit for the rest of your life," the union officers had brought education and training to the bargaining table repeatedly since the local union was formed in 1986. They considered SET as integral to this educational policy. The president of the local union expected SET to help union members move ahead in their careers and in achieving life goals. He recognized that, for some workers, advancement would mean leaving the food service industry and the union, but he believed the union had a responsibility to open those educational opportunities.

On the management side, many of the company representatives also looked to SET as a way to help individuals better themselves. Some strongly felt this to be an expression of their firm's social responsibilities. "Some companies get so hung up on that bottom line [profits] that you tend to forget what some of your responsibilities may be toward your community," commented the director of labor relations for one company, who was a trustee of the Fund and became its secretary in 1991.

Most of the employers saw SET partly as a way to give their employees the basic skills and self-assurance needed for advancement. "My personal 'thing' is that there should be a way to move up on the job," said a manager at another participating company, who served as a trustee of the Fund. But company

officials realized this was not an entirely altruistic goal. As this manager pointed out, "Some of this rubs off on the company."

One way the project could benefit the company was by increasing productivity, in the opinion of several management representatives who had leadership roles in the Fund. They saw their segment of the food service industry as increasingly competitive, with small service-oriented entrepreneurs and specialty firms making inroads in many markets. The companies that had collective bargaining agreements with the cafeteria workers' union were generally anxious to find ways to streamline their operations, improve services, and increase productivity. To do this, some were leaning toward team management approaches where it was critical for each food service worker to communicate with other employees, make decisions, and exercise a full range of basic skills.

The expected link between education and productivity was voiced by the company vice president who was secretary of the Fund when SET was conceived and implemented. "We didn't just want to 'save the world,'" she explained about the project's origins. "The margins in this industry are so small" that the company needed new strategies to stay profitable. This firm identified education and teamwork as keys. "The more your people can work together to increase their efficiencies, the more competitive you can be," the officer said. The company's leadership considered basic skills to be the foundation for increased responsibility, accountability, and decision-making by front-line workers.

Another company trustee for the Fund also envisioned benefits to the companies. The industry's training, she said, has traditionally focused on the narrow skills that workers need "to enhance the particular job they're in," while overlooking broader basic skills that enable workers to grow and advance. Failure to consider basic skills is "where a lot of companies have missed the boat," in the view of this company official.

Like the companies, the union saw this education program as contributing to its own strength as an organization. SET offered skills—reading, writing, communications, math, problem-solving—that could help union members become more knowledgeable citizens of their community and better informed, more active members of their union, according to the union president.

Goals Expressed by HRDI

The company and union interests in the program dovetailed with HRDI's goal of demonstrating an educational model for union-involved workplace literacy programs. Through its research and its own programs, HRDI was well aware of unions' broad experience with education and training. In the growing

national discussion of workplace literacy, however, unions' expertise was often overlooked by public policy-makers and employers, to the detriment of the resulting programs, HRDI's leadership believed. HRDI's director saw the cafeteria workers' project as an opportunity to demonstrate how a strong union role could enhance workplace literacy efforts. As a national demonstration project, the director believed, SET could become a model for union and employer cooperation in workplace literacy. HRDI's own nationwide network would give the model exposure and dissemination.

Limitations to Partners' Expectations

Despite the broadly voiced support for the project, a few companies initially expressed misgivings about participating. The joint union-company format of SET and the Fund's other education programs appeared to create some unease. At least one firm would have preferred to send selected workers to courses of its own choosing. Another company needed reassurance that the staff of the joint literacy project would not come in and do union business at the job sites.

Strong leadership from the company representatives serving on the Fund's board was key in overcoming any initial hesitance to support the workplace literacy project. That leadership was particularly important because the companies' relationship to SET was not a direct relationship but one that went through the Fund. Each company was obligated to support SET by virtue of its membership in the Fund but not by any formal contract or agreement on the part of the individual company. The companies serving on the board exerted persuasive leadership and set an example for the other, generally smaller employers.

Some management representatives expressed concern that after they invested in SET, the project's graduates would leave for better jobs elsewhere. That concern was addressed largely through assurances from the project's proponents on the board that the curriculum would be tailored to the basic skills used in their own workplaces.

C. Participation in the Partnership

The workplace partner—the Fund and its member companies and union—gave SET access to workers and worksites and made other contributions, described below, which helped shape the workplace-based educational program.

SET's nontraditional education partner—HRDI—focused on building educational capacity within the union and industry. HRDI also helped draw attention to SET's distinctive partnership through dissemination activities that began during the grant period. This section discusses how each participating organization contributed to the project.

Role of the Fund As Administrator and Workplace Partner

As the grant's workplace partner, the joint labor-management Fund made 11 general kinds of contributions to SET. These contributions are summarized in Table III-1, "Roles of the Workplace and Education Partners," and explained in more detail below.

Project administration and oversight. The Fund's board of trustees assumed the responsibility for administering the workplace literacy grant. The Fund also had ultimate responsibility for issues relating to the design of the program. The Fund's trustees hired the project staff and maintained general oversight over SET's administrative, financial, and programmatic operations. The program director kept them apprised of SET activities through reports to the board's quarterly meetings.

To oversee most operational or policy matters that arose between quarterly meetings, the board designated two trustees (one labor, one management) as its SET Subcommittee. The management member of the subcommittee served as the formal information conduit to the participating companies, including those that contributed to the Fund but were not represented on the Fund's board. The labor member of the subcommittee, the union president, had the opportunity to oversee SET on a regular basis because the project staff was based at the union headquarters. The board gave SET's program director considerable independence to carry out the project within the parameters of the grant award and received regular quarterly reports from her.

The Fund, through its accounting firm, managed the grant finances. The accounting firm was accustomed to managing the large sums in the pension funds it routinely administered, but it had to deal with some new accounting needs created by the grant. For example, this joint education Fund had never had its own employees, so payroll procedures had to be set up. The Fund's auditors assisted initially in establishing the project's chart of accounts to conform to the approved grant budget. For support in bookkeeping and disbursement of funds, the accountants relied on SET's program director.

TABLE III-1

Roles of the Workplace and Education Partners

Activity	Responsible Partner: Fund	HRDI
Project administration and oversight		
Administered NWLP grant	X	
Participated in program design	X	X
Gave technical assistance on operations		X
Oversaw worksite task analyses	X	
Advised SET staff on curriculum	X	X
Ensured staff access to worksites	X	
Donated classroom equipment	X	
Hired and supervised project staff	X	
Hired and trained instructors	X	
Provided support to staff training		X
Contracted with evaluators	X	
Communications with companies and union		
Enlisted support for project from union, companies	X	X
External dissemination		
Disseminated information to employers, unions, educators		X
Donated goods and services		
Contributed no-cost goods and services	X	X

Attorneys for the Fund pointed out that there were legal issues to consider when the Fund became a federal grant recipient, because joint employee benefit funds so rarely assume that role. None of these issues prevented the Fund from administering its grant.

Recognizing their inexperience as a program operator, the Fund's members sought advice and assistance from organizations with more experience in conducting programs. This was particularly true during the start-up months. Among the advisers were their education partner, HRDI, and the AFL-CIO Education Department.

Communications with companies and union about the project. As noted earlier, the employers and union formally participated in SET through their membership in the Fund rather than through their direct relationship to SET. Therefore, an important role of the Fund was to explain the project to its member firms and enlist their support of the project. Formal communications with the companies included:

- **Initial requests for support during planning.**

  Early in the planning stage, the officers of the board approached each of the larger employers in the Fund to explain the project and enlist their support of the NWLP grant proposal. These "big five" companies agreed to the project and formally endorsed it in letters of support. The proposal was reviewed and approved by the companies represented as trustees of the Fund, which included three of the larger companies and one smaller employer.

- **Announcement of the grant award.**

  At the annual education awards banquet for the Fund's scholarship recipients, about a month after the grant award, officers of the Fund announced the start-up of the workplace literacy grant. Representatives of the companies in attendance at this banquet received an overview of SET from the program director.

- **Written announcement to all the companies.**

  The project was introduced and explained to the companies through a letter from the officers of the Fund, sent during the second month of the grant. The letter went to each company in the Fund, with the recommendation that copies be provided to unit managers. For several smaller companies that had not participated in initial planning or the education banquet, this was the first communication about SET.

- **Invitation to participate in project planning.**

  By letter, each company was asked to send representatives to a planning meeting, held during the third month of the grant (while the pilot class was being planned). At the meeting, officers of the Fund and company representatives discussed their respective roles in the project. The companies that sent representatives to the meeting were those that had been active during planning, specifically the "big five" and the smaller company that served on the board.

- **Flyers about the project.**

  The Fund's officers sent out flyers about SET to each company, for distribution to unit managers and posting in workplaces. Although these were recruitment flyers, they served the additional purpose of informing supervisors about the project. These communications were supplemented by contacts from SET's director and assistant director.

- **Updates about the project in progress.**

  As the project progressed, officers of the Fund made use of opportunities such as the annual education awards night and the two SET graduations to update member companies about SET's accomplishments. SET staff also maintained personal contact with many employer representatives. Toward the end of the grant period, companies were invited to an informational meeting on SET, at which SET staff and evaluators presented reports on the project.

The labor members of the Fund did not have a parallel need for communications. There was only one union, it had been closely involved in the project from its inception, and its trustees comprised a majority of the board of the Fund. With SET staff located at the union hall, union officials had daily contact with the project. The Fund's labor trustees helped to communicate the project's goals and functions to union representatives at different worksites.

Donated goods and services. The Fund helped SET meet its matching requirement through a number of in-kind contributions, including computer equipment. Without that donated equipment, SET would have been unable to offer computer-assisted instruction as part of its workplace literacy curriculum.

Contributions by HRDI As Education Partner

As SET's nontraditional education partner, HRDI made six general kinds of contribution to the project. These were as follows.

Project administration and oversight. As already described, HRDI advised the union in developing the initial approach for this workplace literacy project, and later assisted the union and company representatives in preparing more detailed program plans. HRDI helped the members of the Fund to formulate educational approaches that were responsive to the needs of workers in their industry.

Because SET's educational approach was workplace-based, the Fund (as the workplace partner) was responsible for many of the planning and design functions that are typically carried out by an education partner. The primary responsibility of HRDI, as SET's education partner, was to contribute technical expertise and help the Fund develop its capacity to take on those educational responsibilities.

During the early phase of the project, HRDI provided advice and technical assistance to members of the Fund in establishing an approach for development of a competency-based curriculum. HRDI also participated in designing an approach for training instructors who had experience in adult education but who lacked knowledge about workplace literacy or the education needs of workers in the cafeteria industry.

HRDI's national coordinator for workplace literacy was in regular contact with the project staff during the grant to provide information or assistance as needed. HRDI participated in a variety of meetings with SET's staff, as well as meetings between staff and employers. Through HRDI, SET also had access to technical services from the AFL-CIO Education Department.

External dissemination activities during the grant. HRDI helped make information dissemination an ongoing activity under the grant, rather than waiting until after the grant was completed. Through its national program, its relationships with labor and employer organizations around the country, and its involvement in the training and education community, HRDI gave SET access to a targeted audience. Forums offered through HRDI included:

- **Jobs 2000 U.S. Teleconference.**

  Through HRDI, SET was invited to be one of four featured literacy projects in this teleconference, held in March 1991. The teleconference, sponsored by Project Literacy U.S. (PLUS) and Nabisco, gave SET national recognition and exposed educators across the country to its work-based partnership.

- **News articles.**

  In summer 1990 and fall 1991, HRDI's newsletter carried articles about SET. The newsletter reached leaders in labor, education, training, and government nationwide.

- **HRDI conferences.**

  SET's director and assistant director gave workshops at national or multi-regional HRDI conferences in January 1991 and May 1991. SET staff also made a presentation at the national HRDI conference held in January 1992, the month after the end of the grant. Attending these conferences were education and training officials from labor, government, and industry.

Through these conferences, HRDI brought national attention to the workplace-based educational approaches developed by SET. The conferences gave SET staff an opportunity to disseminate the model curriculum and instructor training materials to others interested in their approach, and to offer further technical assistance to interested organizations.

Roles of the Companies

Among the employers that belonged to the Fund, the level of participation in SET varied from company to company, as summarized in Table III-2, "Levels of Participation by Union and Employers."

Generally, larger employers provided more varied forms of support to the project. The three employers that did not take part prior to the end of the first

TABLE III-2

Levels of Participation by Union and Employers

		Larger Employers					Smaller Employers				
	Union	**A**	**B**	**C**	**D**	**E**	**F**	**G**	**H**	**I**	**J**
Sent Participants (no. of participants)	*[1]	66	28	34	16	34	9	1	1	1	1
Member of Fund's board (at any time during grant)	X	X	X	X		X					
Wrote support letter for grant	X	X	X	X	X	X					
Took part in task analysis	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
Housed classes [2] (no. of classes)	2	7	1	6	2	1					
Paid bonus[3] (no. of bonuses paid)	NA[4]	37	15	19	12	14	4	1	1	1	
Hosted graduation ceremony				X		X					
Furnished office space	X										
Made other contributions	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X

1. All SET participants were members of the union.

2. Classes included 16 regular 72-hour classes and three shorter classes held near the end of the grant. The union, in addition to hosting two classes, also accommodated visits from eight company-hosted classes that used the learning lab at the union hall.

3. A bonus was paid to each learner who completed SET satisfactorily with at least 80% attendance. Bonuses were not given for the shorter classes near the end of the grant.

4. Not Applicable

grant had fewer eligible employees and had not been asked to play a specific role during this grant period.

The extent of each company's participation in SET also tended to reflect the commitment of its top management. The two companies that made the highest contributions to SET's required match were firms whose management was particularly articulate in support of SET and who furnished the largest numbers of learners and classroom facilities.

Participation by company employees. Of the 13 companies that were members of the Fund during the grant period, ten had employees participating in SET. All five of the Fund's larger employers sent participants, and employees of these larger firms comprised over 90 percent of SET's participants. Five of the smaller employers also had employees enrolled in SET. Participants were drawn from 32 of the 67 agencies and institutions where the Fund's member companies operated cafeterias.

To help recruit, each of the companies posted SET flyers in the workplace, or allowed the union to do so. At least one firm produced its own flyers, and several included articles about SET in company newsletters.

The size of the employers' cafeteria workforce had a bearing on the number of participants from each firm. As would be expected, those that employed more members of Local 32 tended to send more learners. But at the ten companies that sent participants, the number coming from each employer was not just related to workforce size. Strong management commitment at the top appeared to contribute to higher enrollment levels from some companies. This was particularly evident with one employer where very supportive management personnel were physically located at worksites and had frequent contact with the workers and their immediate supervisors. About one third of SET's participants came from that company (nearly double the number from the next highest employer). Moreover, supervisors at that company were well-informed about the project and understood their employer's goal that the project should succeed. By contrast, where top-level support was not conveyed strongly and personally, the worksite supervisors had less sense of what the project was about or why it might be of value to their company and its workers.

The location of classes was also a factor in companies' participation levels. The Fund's three small employers who did not send anyone to SET had not had any classes organized in their vicinity. Companies that hosted classes at one of their facilities might not promote the program at their other worksites, often because they intended to serve those other sites at a later time.

Where the companies' internal promotion of SET was likely to be weakest was at the level of the workers' supervisors. The companies generally did not have a strategy for educating supervisory personnel about SET or explaining how supervisors could encourage their personnel to participate. Those that were most successful in their internal communications made use of regular management meetings to explain the project personally and to emphasize the company's commitment to it.

Membership on Fund's board. The companies with the largest numbers of union workers generally were those that served on the board of the joint Fund. For the most part, these companies took the most active roles in designing and overseeing SET.

The Fund's secretary and her company took the lead on behalf of the other employers during the early stages of the project, with the approval of the Fund's other company trustees. The lead company assigned its training director to work with the union and HRDI in designing the project and writing the proposal. Through this joint planning process, the partners identified the broad outlines of their proposed curriculum to meet basic skills needs in the industry. In addition, ideas such as the training bonus were proposed and incorporated into SET's design.

Letters of support. During the initial planning for the grant, the lead company cleared the project concept with the other major employers and obtained their written endorsements of the grant proposal. These were provided as letters of support for the NWLP grant.

Task analysis. Eight companies participated in the task analysis process that provided a basis for the curriculum. These companies cooperated in arranging for the SET staff to visit 18 of their worksites and talk with workers and their supervisors about the basic skills used on the job. Through these visits, the staff analyzed workers' total work environment, not just their specific jobs. In addition, nearly all the companies contributed workplace artifacts or corporate training materials for use in the SET curriculum.

Classroom facilities. All five of the larger companies donated space and equipment for at least one class. This space was not usually a conventional classroom but could be a small dining room or a quiet after-hours corner of a cafeteria. These companies also provided blackboards and other classroom equipment.

Training bonus. The nine employers who had workers who completed SET satisfactorily, with at least 80 percent attendance, paid the $200 training bonus. In all, they paid 104 bonuses. One company adjusted its bonus checks upward so

each employee would receive $200 after payroll deductions were made. The bonus was not a substantial sum of money, but it was important as a tangible sign of the employer's support of SET. To the graduate it was a personal tribute from the company. To company leaders it symbolized a corporate commitment to education.

Graduation ceremonies. Two employers hosted large receptions at SET's two graduation ceremonies. Six companies sent one or more representatives to the graduations to award diplomas and bonus checks to their employees.

Other in-kind goods and services. Eight of the companies made other kinds of matching contributions, including personnel time, meeting facilities, and training materials. In support of SET's dissemination efforts, one employer arranged for the program director to explain the project to company representatives from three cities at a regional culinary conference.

Employers were able to participate in overseeing the project and its staff through their representatives on the board of the Fund and through their participation in periodic meetings with SET staff. Three larger employers and one smaller one sent representatives to the informational meeting with SET staff and evaluators toward the end of the grant, at which they participated in a review of the project and made recommendations based on their experience with SET.

Role of the Union

The union's contributions to SET are summarized above in Table III-2. This union involvement distinguished SET from most other training offered in the food service industry. Specific contributions by the union are discussed here.

Participation by union members. The union, through its existing service network to its members, publicized the project and encouraged members to enroll. Union staff and shop stewards talked to workers individually and at union meetings and union-sponsored social gatherings. Union members who were already taking classes or who had graduated from SET were another source of information about the project. SET's assistant director, as a former member of the union staff, had personal rapport with union members that was an asset to SET's outreach and promotion efforts.

Member of the Fund's board. As already described, union representatives served as trustees of the Fund, and the union president not only chaired the Fund but also its SET Subcommittee. The union took the initiative in designing

SET and bringing together the project partners. Union staff participated with management and HRDI representatives in formulating a program approach suited to the needs and interests of the cafeteria workers. The union brought groups of its members together in focus groups to identify workers' educational priorities and needs. As the project was implemented, union leadership contributed ideas and advice through the formal structures of the Fund and its SET Subcommittee.

Letter of support. During the planning for the NWLP grant, Local 32's international union, the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees, provided a letter of support for SET.

Task analysis. The union helped SET staff obtain access to workers and their worksites for task analyses and interviews about their jobs. SET's assistant director, who came from the union, contributed to the task analysis with her knowledge of the industry and the cafeteria worksites. Also, her credibility with workers helped ensure workers' confidence in, and cooperation with, the worksite analyses. The union furnished a variety of materials for use in the classroom, such as copies of workers' health plans and other benefits under their collective bargaining agreements.

Classroom facilities. SET participants made use of a large classroom at the union hall.

Office space. The union also furnished offices for project staff and facilities for instructor training at the union hall.

Other matching contributions. Personnel time, supplies, and equipment were among the other kinds of contributions from the union.

IV. TOWARD WORKPLACE-BASED EDUCATION: FINDINGS ABOUT THE PARTNERSHIP

"If we work together at all levels of our companies and the unions, just as the Board of Trustees did in implementing these programs, we will help set the pace for the nation's capital, if not the country, in our efforts to increase the education level in our workforce."

- Former officer of the joint Fund

Participation in SET's educational partnership enhanced company and union awareness of basic skill needs in their industry. At the same time it created a foundation within the companies and union that could be a first step in addressing those workplace literacy needs over the longer term. Parts A, B, and C discuss the way the partnership functioned and its impact on this segment of the food service industry; and Part D offers observations on its approach as a model for work-based education.

A. Distinctive Features of the Partnership

Several features distinguished SET's partnership design and differentiated it from many others in the NWLP program.

First, the workers' union was the catalyst for the partnership. When SET was funded in 1990, it was one of relatively few NWLP projects in which the union played such a prominent role. The union's relationship with the participating employers was the vehicle for establishing a partnership across company lines.

Second, the companies and union participated jointly in the project. SET was among the very few NWLP grantees funded up to that time in which a joint labor-management entity took the lead as grantee and project administrator. The companies and union that were members of the Fund had the opportunity to participate equally in all aspects of program management and operations. As members of the organization that served as the NWLP grantee, they were not merely silent partners in SET but had responsibility for overseeing funds, staff, and project activities.

Third, the project provided a structure to reinforce the internal capacity of the workplace partners to pursue joint educational goals. Through SET, the companies and union worked to define their educational needs and design a program suited to the workers in their industry. SET staff became a new educational resource within the workplace partners' existing organizational structures. SET's education partner contributed technical assistance to enhance this workplace-based educational capability.

B. Impact on Participating Companies and Union

The NWLP partnership gave the participating companies and union their first experience with basic skills education. Unlike partners coming together for the first time, however, these workplace partners had earlier experience in an educational partnership, as described in Section III.

As a result of participating in the NWLP grant, the food service companies and union experienced greater awareness of basic skill needs, of gaps in their existing training programs, and of barriers to upward mobility. SET was seen by both the union and companies as providing practical experience on which to build in the future. SET also enhanced the avenues for communication between labor and management in the industry.

This section discusses the impact of SET's workplace-based educational partnership on the individual companies and union in this segment of the food service industry.

Recognition of Basic Skill Needs

The employers and union came into the project knowing that the educational attainment of the industry's workers was generally not high, but participation in SET appeared to provide the companies and union with a clearer understanding of the basic skills used in the jobs in their industry and the importance of those skills to the companies and workers alike.

High-level management officials from the participating companies reported that SET's first 21 months of operation raised their awareness of the role literacy skills played in their industry's workplaces. Without exception, their companies were new to the workplace literacy field and had no previous experience in providing basic skills courses for their hourly employees. As they participated in planning the workplace literacy project, oversaw SET's implementation, and

observed workers who had gone through the program, they reported becoming more cognizant of the ways in which workers used basic skills in the cafeteria jobs. They also expressed their growing appreciation of the role of literacy skills in achieving a competitive and productive workforce. As one company trustee of the Fund commented, "We found out we had to start with [basic] skills or we're building on a sinking foundation."

At the same time, company officials began to pay more attention to the ways that basic skill deficiencies could affect workplace behavior and job performance. They realized that behavior that they viewed as unproductive could sometimes be caused by basic skill problems. In interviews for the project evaluation, several company representatives cited the stressful work environment that they saw being created when workers and their managers did not communicate effectively. That stressful work situation, in turn, could generate problems that adversely affected their business operations, ranging from unhappy customers to food waste. SET staff helped companies understand the connection between literacy skills and workplace performance, particularly by involving managers in the on-site task analyses. Supportive company officials also emphasized that connection in their communications with unit managers. As a result of SET, managers at some sites reported taking a new look at workplace dynamics to see which problems might be rooted in basic skill needs. One personnel director observed that when a worker was having problems, the question now might be, "Why aren't they in SET?"

For the union, workers' positive response to SET was seen as confirming what the union had predicted would be a substantial interest in educational opportunity among workers in the industry. With SET participants coming to the union hall regularly to use the project's learning lab, the union was able to demonstrate its support to its members in meeting their educational goals.

Identification of Gaps in Training

Closely related to companies' growing understanding of the role of basic skills in the workplace was their new awareness of gaps in their existing training programs. Several officials expressed interest in making workplace literacy education a more integral part of the training offered to workers in the industry.

Historically, each of the individual food service companies has had its own training policies and programs for hourly workers. Formal pre-employment training has been limited or nonexistent, with workers learning their skills primarily by watching others. New employees are usually trained by working at the side of a more experienced hourly worker who is responsible for explaining the job. To introduce new procedures or address operational problems, the

firms generally rely on supervisors to devise their own training. For in-service training, the companies offer a number of video and film presentations aimed at achieving and maintaining high standards of safety, sanitation, food handling, and hospitality. None of these training activities had addressed the basic reading, writing, math, and communications skills covered by SET.

Exposure to SET made company officials aware that basic skills education could complement and strengthen other company training. As SET neared the end of its first grant, several voiced interest in linking SET's basic skills program to other company training priorities, such as sanitation requirements or customer relations.

But while company officials frequently commented on the role basic skills education could play as a complement to other company training, they had not taken the next step of actually linking the two. For example, an official at one company recognized that SET could build the communications and problem-solving skills that were essential for the team management approaches that the company was teaching to workers and supervisors in a separate company training program. However, the similarity of purpose was not communicated to the operational level. As a result, the two programs functioned independently, without reinforcing each other.

In the same way, officials at some of the companies talked about a need for training to help managers supervise SET graduates effectively. These officials felt supervisors needed new management strategies to help learners transfer their skills from SET's classroom into their work situations, where they would be capable of performing at higher skill levels, exercising greater judgment, and making more independent decisions. The companies had not taken specific steps to meet this newly identified training need.

Awareness of Barriers to Upward Mobility

Undertaking a basic skills project led to some discussion of promotional opportunities among members of the Fund. Management and union officials believed that education would raise workers' expectations for career advancement, but there were mixed views on how realistic an expectation this would be in these companies. SET's experience seemed to bear this out. Of the two graduates known to have received career advancements by the end of the grant period, one moved up to a first cook position with her same employer, while the other was hired for an office clerical position outside the food service industry.

Officials at some of the larger companies expressed the feeling that they should be doing more to promote hourly workers into supervisory positions, and they saw SET as a way to develop workers' qualifications for advancement. They said a promotion policy would mean posting entry-level managerial openings, which some of the firms did not do, and actively encouraging hourly workers to apply. Officials from some companies felt that an applicant's past involvement in an education project like SET could be considered as a qualification for advancement into managerial jobs.

Companies' human resource officials generally recognized that they could not succeed in expanding their upward mobility policies unless they also developed support for those policies at the level of mid-level management. Some mid-level managers were seen as resisting upward mobility because they did not wish to lose their best workers. This issue remained unresolved.

Opportunities for advancement to non-management positions within the Local 32 bargaining unit were always few in number, primarily because of low turnover in the cafeterias' higher-paid hourly positions. When openings occurred, they were generally filled by promoting from within the collective bargaining unit. The union and employers felt SET prepared participants to take advantage of advancement opportunities when future openings occur. As one company representative said, "This is a program that gives people both the skills and the self-confidence to apply for upgraded jobs."

Practical Experience on Which to Build

Top management tended to view their company's involvement in SET as a starting point for their continued work on basic skills education in the future. Company officials endorsed SET's approach and wanted to find ways to expose more workers to the program. They were optimistic that they could raise the basic educational level of their workforce through SET. "I would like to ensure that everyone on our payroll can read and do basic arithmetic," one commented. From their experience during the grant period, several made suggestions of work-related subjects they would like SET staff to incorporate in the curriculum in the future, and they expressed interest in sending company representatives to make special presentations to SET classes.

The union was hopeful of reaching all or a majority of its members through future SET classes. Expanding the project to make it available to its members in other cities was a priority for the union leadership. The union also aspired to bring additional employers into the Fund, through collective bargaining, so the workers it represented at other companies could make use of SET.

Enhanced Avenues for Communication

Some company and union representatives reported that the basic skills project opened new kinds of communication in the workplace between labor and management. SET graduates were seen as more confident about initiating conversations with managers and discussing workplace issues or problems with their supervisors. Company representatives felt the participants were not only more confident about initiating discussions but that they also expressed themselves more effectively. Communications were not limited to job-related topics; the learning program itself, as a new topic of mutual interest, was often the subject of their interchanges. Meetings between supervisors and workers in at least one worksite began to include reports from SET participants about what they were learning in the program. Informal discussions between supervisors and workers also focused on SET. One company executive noticed that when he came into a room where people were working, they tended to talk to him now rather than keeping to themselves; one thing they talked to him about was their class.

These enhanced communications skills, in the view of some employers, supported their management objective of team approaches and decentralized problem-solving in the workplace. As one management official commented, "Some of the greatest ideas come from employees. But to get them, you have to communicate."

C. Impact on Industry's Educational Capacity

In addition to outcomes within the individual company and union organizations, SET established a foundation for longer-term educational development in their industry, should the union and companies wish to pursue that.

First, SET established a model for their joint decision-making on basic skills education. Not only did SET give the companies and union experience in joint problem-solving in the area of workplace basic skills, but it demonstrated that their Fund, with its joint governing structure, could be a satisfactory mechanism for their cooperation in addressing workplace literacy needs.

Second, SET helped the members of this industry define a new educational approach for their workers. In creating an educational partnership within their own industry, these partners found that they could offer a workplace-based alternative to the traditional education system. Instead of relying on educational

institutions that had limited knowledge about their needs, labor and management took the first step toward creating their own educational capacity with SET. The development of project staff internal to the workplace partnership gave these companies and union a base that could lend itself to future industry-based education programs. This was demonstrated during the funding gap between SET's first and second NWLP grants, when the Fund produced private resources to support the staff's operation of an interim program.

The union had begun to consider ways of developing non-government resources for basic skills; for example, by negotiating an increase in the three-cents-an-hour education contribution under its collective bargaining agreements with employers, and earmarking the new funds for basic skills enhancement. Such funding, if agreed to by both labor and management, could clearly be important in institutionalizing the Fund's educational capacities, once SET's joint educational approach has been refined through the NWLP demonstration.

D. An Alternative Model for Work-based Education

The relationship between SET's workplace and education partners provides a model for education based within an industry rather than a traditional academic setting:

(1) A joint education program can give companies and unions their own internal educational capacity.

Working through a joint administrative entity, companies and unions can hire staff and oversee their own workplace literacy programs. Technical support from a nontraditional education partner can strengthen their internal capabilities to conduct the joint education program. SET's workplace-based approach shows that businesses and unions do not have to rely on outside education institutions for the design and operation of basic skills programs. They can develop education programs "from the inside out."

(2) Such joint programs can create new institutional capacity for basic skills education.

As partners in educating workers, joint union and employer organizations represent a significant potential resource for the education community. In the

developing field of workplace literacy, where there have been few resources in most communities, they should be an important part of the education scene.

(3) Staffing the program with persons from both education and the workplace can anchor the program in both worlds.

This "partnership staffing" approach gives the program its footing in literacy education while helping ensure its relevance to the workplace. For SET, the two staff—one with an adult education background and the other with experience in the union—reinforced the dual NWLP focus on workplace and literacy. The former union representative was also effective in involving workers and employers in SET.

V. THE IMPACT OF SET ON WORKERS: FINDINGS REGARDING THE ENHANCEMENT OF LEARNERS AND THE OPERATION OF THE PROGRAM

"The graduates became more assertive, confident, and articulate; improved their work habits and abilities; and were more willing to initiate positive interactions with co-workers and customers."
- Supervisor of SET graduates

"I learned that it's here, right in my head. I had doubts, but now I know that I can do it myself."
- SET graduate, pilot class

Throughout the grant period, SET staff, instructors, and evaluators collected information about learners and the program that was used to monitor the progress of the program and determine its effectiveness. Much of this information was focused on learners—their attendance, their progress in enhancing basic skills, and their perceptions about the program and how it was helping them to achieve their educational goals. Data also were gathered about the operation of the program, including the utility of staff training methods, curriculum development activities, and the linkage of the program to the workplace.

Discussed in this section are the evaluation's findings regarding the impact of SET on learners' skill and personal enhancement and on their achievement of goals. Also presented is an assessment of the overall utility of SET as a workplace literacy program.

A. Enhancing Learners

Workers participated in SET not only to strengthen their basic skills but also to engage in a personal growth experience that would enable them to function better at work and at home. Discussed below are the effects that SET had on workers.

Retaining Participants

A major issue affecting the delivery of adult education services in this country is the difficulty these programs have in retaining learners. On average, approximately 40 percent of adults entering a basic education program continue after 12 hours of instruction.

The SET staff worked assiduously to recruit and retain participants. During the grant period, 191 cafeteria workers enrolled in the program and 55 percent completed the 72 hours required for receipt of a bonus incentive. Compared to the national trend, SET's retention rate was more than adequate.

Learners also were encouraged to continue their participation by enrolling in more than one cycle of classes. One third of the workers took advantage of this opportunity and attended either one or two additional classes.

While more than half of the workers recruited completed the program, SET staff found the recruitment process tedious and somewhat frustrating. Workers would indicate an initial interest during recruitment meetings at the worksite, but then would not follow-up and enroll in the program. Several factors may explain this pattern, such as the time required after work to participate in class, difficulties with transportation to class locations, and a long work day that makes education after work sometimes difficult.

In attempting to address these factors, SET staff went to worksites to meet with prospective learners to discuss potential barriers to participation and how these might be overcome. While these activities were somewhat successful, other recruitment methods should be considered. For example, efforts could be made to attract learners through peer networks, whereby SET participants would contact other workers to encourage their participation in the program.

Improving Basic Skills

SET's instructional program focused on improving learners' skills in reading, mathematics, writing, communications, and problem solving. Two sets of instruments were used to assess learners' progress in these areas: CASAS/ECS and applied performance measures developed by COSMOS.

CASAS/ECS. All workers entering SET were given the CASAS/ECS pre-test in reading and mathematics during the first week of classes and the post-test at the end of the class cycle, which was usually after 72 hours of instruction.

Presented in Table V-1 are the results from the analysis of the CASAS/ECS data. Only matched pairs of valid scores (i.e., tests scores that indicate that the instrument was administered according to guidelines set by CASAS) were used in the analysis. For reading, 97 percent of the learners completing the program had both matched pairs and valid scores. For the mathematics test, 80 percent of the learners fell in this category. The percentage of valid scores is an indicator of the extent to which SET instructors administered the tests correctly.

As shown in the table, the majority of learners taking the reading test were Level C—usually defined as upper-level basic education. The mean gain score of learners in both Levels B and C was 4.0, which is consistent with the reading gains shown by learners in other programs utilizing CASAS assessment instruments. The levels of learners taking the mathematics test were divided approximately in half between Levels B and C. The mean gain score for the Level B learners was 3.2. Level C learners achieved a mean gain of 2.0. The performance of Level C learners may be due to the fact that their pre-test scores were relatively high, thereby limiting the amount of growth that was likely to occur.

In the analysis of the CASAS/ECS data, the number of hours that learners attended classes was correlated with the mean gain score on the CASAS/ECS. However, this analysis did not reveal any relationship between the number of hours of participation in a class and mean gain on the tests.

While test data are one indicator of learners' success in the program, their comments during the interviews held with members of the evaluation team (37 learners were interviewed) at the end of the courses illustrate the qualitative effects that participation in SET has had on workers. Participants indicated that instruction in reading either helped to refresh their skills or to build new skills that they could use at work and at home. Remarks such as "I can now find things I want in the newspaper" and "It's good to know what you're reading" are reflective of the feelings expressed by SET participants.

For mathematics instruction, learners were more likely to report the specific skills that they had gained. For many, SET was the first opportunity since high school to receive formal instruction in mathematics. Participants reported that they were able to apply the mathematics that they learned on the job, in "breaking down recipes," "counting more quickly," and in "using the calculator." The benefits from this instruction in their family lives also were evident. Learners said that they could help their children with homework, particularly computing fractions, and carry out household tasks involving math more easily.

TABLE V-1

Summary of ECS Results, by Student Level
(Matched Pairs)

Reading
(N=97)

Level	Pre-Test Scores		Post-Test Scores		Gain Scores	
	Mean	No. of Students	Mean	No. of Students	Mean	No. of Students
Level A	183.7	3	183.7	3	0.0	3
Level B	211.1	23	215.1	23	4.0	23
Level C	227.0	71	231.0	71	4.0	71

MATH
(N=80)

Level	Pre-Test Scores		Post-Test Scores		Gain Scores	
	Mean	No. of Students	Mean	No. of Students	Mean	No. of Students
Level A	198.0	11	199.0	11	1.1	11
Level B	210.2	38	213.4	38	3.2	38
Level C	228.3	31	230.3	31	2.0	31

In the interviews, learners were able to articulate the specific circumstances in which they had been able to apply their skills—one indicator that the context-based teaching had been successful. They also were able to describe the basic skills that they had learned, and the ways in which their improved skills were useful on the job (e.g., estimating the cost of items at the salad bar; estimating the measure of ingredients in food preparation), in their families (assisting children or grandchildren with school tasks), and in the community (communicating their perspectives about neighborhood issues).

Applied Performance Measures. In order to assess the ability of learners to apply basic skills in the context of the cafeteria workplace, COSMOS's research team developed and SET instructors pilot-tested six applied performance assessment instruments. As described in Section II, these instruments assessed the application of skills using realia such as employment agreements, application forms, and dress code policies. The evaluator also specified the criteria for evaluating the competencies measured in each of the instruments. The analysis of the pilot-test results indicated that at least half of the learners participating in the pilot test (approximately 27 percent of those completing the program) were able to demonstrate with 100 percent accuracy each of the items except for one—completion of the application form. The item that had the highest percentage of learners achieving 100 percent accuracy was the interpretation of the dress code policy.

The results from the pilot test indicated that learners were able to perform the tasks being assessed and that they enjoyed the opportunity to work on simulations that related to the work environment. The pilot test also revealed that additional items should be developed so that a broader array of skills could be assessed in context, and that pre- and post-versions of the assessments were needed.

Dialogue Journals. While not a formal assessment instrument, the journals that learners were asked to maintain provided valuable information to instructors about learners' writing skills and enabled learners to practice writing on a routine basis. In the interviews, learners were overwhelmingly satisfied with the journal process. For many, it was their first opportunity to write descriptively. Comments from learners included "Journal helped me get 'ands' and 'buts' out of sentences," and "I like writing in the journal—it helped me learn new words when I write."

A critical factor in the popularity of the journal was the support and feedback provided by instructors. Rather than focus on the correction of grammar, instructors commented on the content of the writing and encouraged

learners to experiment with writing structures even if they were unsure of the correct form. Learners also found this task to be one that they enjoyed completing at home and which helped to reinforce the instruction they received in classes.

Building Communication Skills

One of the most important results of SET has been developing learners' communication skills. As cafeteria workers who are members of Local 32, SET participants regularly interact with customers, supervisors, fellow workers, and union personnel. For many, the art of communication is difficult and the lack of skills in this area has been problematic. To address these needs of workers, SET instructors conducted role plays and other exercises that gave learners an opportunity to practice their communication skills and study the uses and impact of language.

During the interviews, learners discussed the types of skills that they had learned. These included responding to customer requests, discussing problems with supervisors and fellow workers, speaking in group meetings, and interpreting and using language appropriately. Comments such as "I talk better and relate better" and "I serve on the line and now talk more clearly and with more confidence" are illustrative of the results from this instruction. The lessons in communication also provided learners with opportunities to learn problem-solving and decision-making skills as applied to the workplace.

Enhancing Self Esteem

The development of self esteem often is noted as one of the unintended effects of adult education programs. For learners who are returning to an educational setting after a long absence, the enhancement of self esteem appears to be critical to adults' success in a program. The experience of SET participants is no exception. During the interviews with members of the evaluation team and in discussions with SET staff, learners described the ways in which participating in SET has not only enhanced their skills but also helped them to develop a sense of worth and pride, control over their environment, and a sense of accomplishment. Learners attributed these results to the supportive learning atmosphere set by instructors, the attention and help that were provided, and SET staff's belief in their ability to succeed in the program.

B. Structuring An Effective Program

As a demonstration model, SET staff had flexibility in designing and carrying out a program that would meet the needs of the cafeteria workers from Local 32. This section provides an overall assessment of SET's efforts in staff training, curriculum development, and using the workplace as an educational setting.

Staff Training

SET staff created a systematic process for providing preservice and inservice training to instructors hired for the program. With limited or no experience in workplace education, competency-based education, and the development of a demonstration model, these instructors were in need of ongoing assistance to learn about the workplace and methods for teaching basic skills in this context. Furthermore, their functioning as a team was critical to the development of a program model that had potential for replication.

As part of the evaluation's activities, interviews were conducted with SET's instructors. During these interviews, the instructors discussed the impact that participating in the program had on them as well as their assessment of the administration of the program. While all of the instructors were experienced adult education teachers, their participation in a worksite program provided them with a new view of learners. Many commented that they learned to appreciate the complexity of these workers' lives and the efforts that they were making—sometimes at great personal expense—to improve their skills and abilities. This appreciation prompted some of the instructors to make extra efforts to bring materials from home that could be of benefit to learners.

While the instructors agreed that the inservice training was needed and worthwhile, they had difficulty grasping the nuances of the workplace and in generating examples of context-based applications. One factor explaining this may be that the amount and breadth of training materials were overwhelming and, as part-time workers, these instructors did not have enough time to integrate what they were learning with their instructional style.

Curriculum Development

A key activity performed by SET's staff during the grant period was the initial development and ongoing refinement of a workplace basic skills curriculum. As previously described, the staff developed a curriculum guide and accompanying materials from the workplace that were disseminated to instructors during their preservice and inservice training sessions. This curriculum development was a particularly important part of the program, since there were no existing curriculum materials that were focused on the hospitality industry. In addition, the instructors' lack of prior experience with workplace basic skills education called for a comprehensive approach to staff development, including customized curriculum materials.

In the interviews conducted with instructors, they reported that the curriculum was useful and assisted them in attempting to customize their instruction to workplace-related experiences. However, the instructors also acknowledged that it was a difficult process for them to learn the application of basic skills to a workplace context with which few of them were familiar. Rather than using an integrated approach in teaching, the instructors initially tended to include the workplace materials as an addendum to a more traditional basic skills curriculum with which they were comfortable. As time progressed, the instructors were more willing to try to teach basic skills in the context of the learners' work settings.

The SET curriculum also involved the process of setting instructional goals with learners through the development of individual learning plans. Instructors were to set the goals with learners and then review the plans periodically to ensure that learners were pursing their goals and undertaking activities that would help them achieve positive results. While the instructors considered the individual learning plans to be an important part of the program, they also found the process time consuming to implement. Because of this factor, the implementation of the learning plans was modified over the course of the grant so that the plans were reviewed periodically as learners moved through the various stages of instruction.

The Workplace as an Educational Setting

A major goal of this NWLP grant was to demonstrate the utility of the workplace as a setting for basic skills education. The interview data provided by program participants indicates that they appreciated the opportunity to learn workplace-related skills and felt that this learning translated into new behaviors

for them in the workplace. For many learners, the experience motivated them to enroll in multiple SET courses, to express the desire to participate in any educational programs offered by the union, and to seek information about adult education courses available in the community. The educational experience also had value for these adults beyond the workplace—in the family and in community life. SET participants' ability to describe these outcomes and the ways in which they were able to use their skills with their children, grandchildren, and neighbors indicates the overall impact of the program.

From the perspective of the workplace, one goal of SET was to provide new opportunities for workers to practice the skills learned in instruction in the work setting. In order for this to occur, workers needed to be recognized for the new skills gained and encouraged to pursue more difficult work tasks. From the interviews conducted with the supervisors of SET participants, it was evident that their recognition of SET participants was sporadic and not systematic. In some instances, the supervisors knew little or nothing about SET or the fact that some workers were involved in the program. In other cases, the differences between SET participants and their supervisors was minimal in terms of skill performance. In both circumstances, the critical support for the learner to practice and further develop skills in the work setting was missing.

SET's experience in attempting to encourage supervisors to encourage their workers to participate in the program and to help them utilize new skills learned in the program indicates that a multi-faceted approach is probably needed in working with supervisors. While the dissemination of information about the program to supervisors is critical, it also may be beneficial for the SET staff to discuss with the supervisors the varied ways in which workers engaged in an educational activity can be supported and reinforced in the work environment.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POLICY AND PRACTICE

As a national demonstration model, the Skills Enhancement Training program offers valuable lessons about the processes and policies that are critical to the operation of a joint labor-management effort to enhance the literacy skills of workers. Through SET's formative evaluation, data were gathered, analyzed, and disseminated to program staff for their use in the ongoing refinement of SET. The summative findings provide information that is applicable to SET and other workplace literacy programs. Discussed in this section are recommendations concerning: first, the ongoing implementation of SET during the second grant period; second, the lessons from the experience of SET's workplace partners; and third, steps that the U.S. Department of Education might consider in its technical assistance to NWLP grantees.

A. Implementing a Workplace Literacy Program

The findings from the evaluation of SET suggest processes that can be carried out to enhance the operation of a union-based adult literacy program that is centered in the workplace. This section discusses lessons regarding the implementation of the key programmatic components of SET.

Lessons Regarding Recruitment

Methods for recruiting workers to participate in SET should continue to include the use of SET participants to enlist their fellow workers' registration in the program. Studies of learner recruitment in adult basic skills programs have shown that peer recruitment often is a most effective technique for attracting and retaining program participants. This strategy might be utilized by sponsoring focus groups at the union to provide an opportunity for SET participants to discuss their SET experiences with other workers.

An important element in recruitment is the form in which information is disseminated. In addition to using flyers, SET staff might consider producing a low-cost video that features SET learners in the varied class settings. This product, which could be used in the previously discussed focus groups, could communicate the instructional options available to workers as well as the perceptions of those who are satisfied with the program.

Enhancing the Instructional Program

The findings regarding the operation of the instructional program point to the following steps that might be taken to strengthen its overall effectiveness:

(1) The types of instruction offered in the program need to be diversified to attract a broader segment of workers and to motivate workers who have participated in SET to enroll in additional classes.

The SET classes offered during this grant period met the needs of the workers who were originally targeted for SET. However, as the program progressed it was apparent that classes in ESL, basic literacy, GED preparation, and workplace communications skills would benefit a number of workers and would offer participants enrolled in the original SET class an opportunity for further development.

(2) The integration of workplace material in instruction needs to be expanded so that instructors can more readily apply the teaching of basic skills to the context of the workplace.

While the process used to develop the SET curriculum included extensive task analyses and the use of realia from the workplace, instructors have been reluctant to expand the materials that they were given to include additional workplace applications. To enhance instructors' ability to teach in the context of the workplace, the SET staff should create additional workplace-based artifacts that can be incorporated into existing curricula and any new curriculum materials that are developed.

(3) Further instruction in workplace communications is needed to provide SET participants with a broad range of skills that they can use with customers, their supervisors, and fellow workers.

SET participants have indicated their strong satisfaction with the communications segment of SET and have asked for further instruction on this topic. The communications skills taught in SET have been both valued and readily used by participants. As beginning skills, they warrant further development and attention by the program.

(4) Increased attention should be directed toward involving first-line supervisors in reinforcing the skills learned by workers in SET and supporting their participation in the program.

One factor that facilitates learners' retention of skills learned in an adult education program is the opportunity to practice these skills in applied contexts. For programs funded under the NWLP, this opportunity is the workplace in which program participants are employed. In the case of SET participants, there has been limited support extended by first-line supervisors in structuring work assignments to ensure that participants can utilize their new skills on the job. To facilitate this process, additional awareness training should be provided to supervisors to inform them about SET and strategies they can use to facilitate participants' application of the skills learned through SET.

Instructor Training

As individuals with no prior experience in workplace literacy and limited involvement in the implementation of a national demonstration program, SET instructors have had to learn techniques for teaching in context and for working together as a team in carrying out a program model. In addition, they have been taught the theory and practice of competency-based adult education and how this practice can be integrated into a workplace literacy program. Two recommendations are made regarding the content and process of SET instructor training:

(1) Further training is needed to expand instructors' knowledge of the cafeteria workplace and methods for integrating the teaching of basic skills in this context.

While instructors have increased their knowledge of the workplace and the use of competency-based adult education methods, they could benefit from additional assistance in developing workplace-oriented materials. This need will be critical if SET courses are expanded to include different content and learning levels.

(2) Instructors should be given more opportunities during inservice meetings to demonstrate their teaching of basic skills in a workplace context.

The theory of learning by practice can be applied to instructors as well as to learners. SET instructors could benefit from more structured opportunities to demonstrate lessons to their peers and to receive feedback and suggestions for improvement. This process also would provide SET staff with additional information about the strengths and gaps in instructors' knowledge and teaching techniques.

Learner Assessment

The implementation of the learner assessment component of SET has proved to be challenging to instructors with limited experience in the systematic collection and interpretation of assessment information. The following suggestions are made to enhance instructors' capacity to undertake learner assessment:

(1) Further training is needed to assist instructors in interpreting the results from the use of CASAS/ECS instruments and conveying these results to SET participants.

While most instructors have had some experience administering assessment instruments, few have had to interpret the results and use these results to guide learners' instruction. To build SET instructors' skills in this area, simulation exercises should be used during inservice meetings to strengthen instructors' skills in interpreting and discussing assessment results with learners.

(2) Instructors should be provided with further training in the administration of competency-based, applied performance assessment instruments.

As SET's applied performance measures are expanded, the administration and interpretation of these measures should be reviewed with instructors. This practice will help to assure the valid use of the assessment process.

B. Establishing a Work-based Partnership

This section discusses lessons from the experience of SET's workplace partners. It includes recommendations on strengthening SET's future

partnership activities as well as suggestions for other unions and employers considering a joint approach to workplace-based education.

Enhancing SET's Partnership

The evaluation findings suggest a number of areas in which additional steps could be taken to enhance SET's innovative partnership. This section makes recommendations for strengthening and institutionalizing that partnership.

(1) The leadership of the Fund should seek to encourage full participation in SET by the Fund's member companies, by:

- Stepping up the communications between the board of the Fund and each member company.

The Fund's commitment to SET, alone, is not enough to ensure the active involvement of its member companies. More systematic outreach to all companies could strengthen their involvement with SET and reduce the disparities in their levels of participation. For example, SET's staff could assist the Fund in distributing periodic updates about the program or in holding occasional meetings to obtain companies' input and ideas, and representatives of all the companies could be invited to participate in some SET classes. Personal contacts from the Fund's company trustees and SET staff would also help to involve all companies. The Fund may want to clarify its communications process to make sure no company (or corporate division) is overlooked.

- Encouraging strong top-down support within each company, from top management to mid-level and front-line supervisors.

Top management support is necessary but not sufficient for the ultimate success of a workplace-based education program. Companies also need to expand their internal communications about the program to better inform mid-level and front-line supervisors. SET staff can assist the companies in doing this by keeping them supplied with information about the program.

Good internal communications about SET will also help ensure continuity when cafeteria sites change their food service contractors. When a company loses its food service contract at a given cafeteria site, the top management leaves but lower-level personnel usually remain.

New communications efforts could include: (1) messages from top management to supervisors informing them about SET, its educational goals, how it operates, and the company's role in the program; (2) greater communications with supervisors by company officials and SET staff to increase supervisors' awareness of what workers are learning in SET; (3) more frequent interviews or informal discussions between supervisors and SET staff to obtain ideas from supervisors about additional subjects SET classes should cover; and (4) support for training or workshops to show supervisors how they can utilize workers' reading, writing, math, and communications skills on the job.

- Assisting the companies to publicize the program at sites not served during SET's first grant.

This publicity can help SET reach workers who have not had a chance to take classes. Approaches should include: (1) meetings with workers at sites that had not participated; (2) communications with companies' unit managers about the program; and (3) development of new classroom sites convenient to those locations.

(2) Labor and management should seek to create more opportunities for workers to use their educational skills within the industry, by:

- Encouraging advancement to better jobs.

Taking classes and improving basic skills do not automatically lead to career advancement for workers in this industry; both institutional and attitudinal barriers can still stand in the way. The companies and union should continue to explore ways to help workers take advantage of promotional opportunities where they can make use of higher skills. This could include the idea of a "super-seniority" preference for SET graduates, as discussed during the grant period. With super-seniority, a SET graduate would receive preference for promotion when other factors were equal—much like a veterans' preference.

Companies may also want to examine their existing personnel policies and consider changes that would support the advancement of hourly workers to entry-level managerial positions. Those openings will need to be posted and discussed with hourly employees. Supervisors should be given clear guidance about encouraging workers to apply for openings. Educational requirements for managerial jobs should be reassessed, and an individual's past participation in SET or other educational programs could be given weight. Consideration might be given for past work experience in the company's food service operations.

- Helping workers make use of newly acquired skills in their jobs.

Individuals who learn new skills in the classroom may not get an opportunity to use those new skills at work, particularly when their supervisors are unaware of what they have learned and do not understand how to draw on the new skills. The companies and union should jointly consider ways to make more effective use of workers' new reading, writing, math, communications, and problem-solving skills.

At a minimum, this could include educating supervisors about the workplace-related basic skills being taught in the classroom, and developing their supervisory skills as described below. Once a majority of workers has received basic skills education, there should be a joint company and union reassessment of how work is carried out in the cafeterias, with an eye to "up-skilling" the jobs so workers can fully exercise their newly learned skills.

- Developing supervisors' skills.

Giving workers the opportunity to use new reading, writing, math, and communication skills in their jobs will oblige their managers to use new supervisory techniques—and to abandon the routines with which they are comfortable. Supervisors may lack the confidence or skills to give workers more autonomy in problem-solving and decision-making. Some front-line cafeteria managers do not have much more education than the workers they supervise. Training to address these managerial needs would help the companies make more effective use of all of their human resources. For those companies that wish to move toward a more participatory, less hierarchical workplace, this kind of supervisory training will be essential.

(3) The union and industry may want to consider a continuing commitment to basic skills enhancement, by pursuing options suggested by experience under the grant. These future steps could include:

- Exploring different options for continuing or expanding their joint education efforts.

If they choose to follow the approach taken with the Fund's other education programs, an option would be to fund basic skills education through funds negotiated in collective bargaining. The union has proposed doing this.

- Continuing the training bonus.

The training bonus was important to the program as a symbol of each company's commitment to skill enhancement as well as a token recognizing the individual's accomplishments.

- Linking education to job advancement.

Completion of SET or other education courses could be a prerequisite for advancement to jobs requiring strong basic skills. The proposed super-seniority preference would be one way of helping SET graduates move ahead.

- Developing new links between the company's existing training programs and the basic skills education offered by SET.

Recognizing how the skills acquired through SET can complement other training will enable the companies to better address the full range of human resource development needs.

(4) As the project's needs evolve, the role of its educational partner should change.

Because SET is based in the workplace rather than at an educational institution, it has distinct needs from its educational partner. In SET's early days, HRDI was instrumental in helping the company and union leaders formulate their educational strategies. As SET's own staff gain experience, HRDI should not need to be so closely involved in the design and delivery of educational services. Instead, the project should consider shifting HRDI's role to meet the evolving needs of SET, such as increased assistance in disseminating and implementing this educational model in other workplace settings.

Lessons for Other Educational Partnerships

SET's experience suggests that a number of conditions within unions and companies can favor the emergence of a partnership on workplace literacy. To the extent that these conditions can be found in other workplace settings, they appear to increase the likelihood of successful development of similar joint educational efforts. Among these are:

(1) Before attempting an educational partnership, employers and unions need to understand how education will benefit their organizations.

On one level, the union and companies established SET to help individual workers. At the same time, though, they saw how the program would help achieve their own corporate or union goals. That understanding appears to be important if organizations are to make a real commitment to education.

(2) The labor-management partners need to be in basic accord on a workforce philosophy of human resource development.

Preceding SET was the union and companies' agreement on the basic directions of a human resource policy that rewarded workers for retention in their jobs. Their collective bargaining agreements rejected the idea of a contingent, high-turnover or part-time workforce but sought instead to provide jobs with security, dignity, good wages, and a wide range of employee benefits. Agreement on these basic workforce development issues created an environment favorable to a joint educational endeavor.

(3) It helps to have an existing partnership structure on which to build.

In SET's case, the existing joint education benefits trust provided a framework for cooperation on the workplace literacy program. For other companies and unions, there may be a history of joint endeavors that could be the foundation for cooperation on workplace literacy, such as a negotiated employee benefits trust fund, a joint training trust, an occupational safety program, or the like.

(4) Strong unions and companies like these have an advantage in developing joint education programs.

SET's labor and management partners came to the program with mutual respect for one another. They recognized each others' strengths and respected their differences, and this appeared to help them enter into the joint literacy program without compromising those differences. Both sides wanted literacy education, though for somewhat different reasons. SET's design offered a way for both to get what they wanted.

(5) Unions and companies need access to good strategic and technical advice on education.

The union and employers participating in SET drew on their relationship with their education partner, HRDI, to formulate their joint strategy for basic skills. Advice and technical support available through HRDI helped them build their capacity to meet their educational goals.

Involvement of Multiple Workplaces

SET's experience shows that competing companies can combine forces in workplace literacy programs. As such, it offers lessons for others to consider when planning an educational strategy for an industry or group of employers.

(1) Small and medium employers, and their unions, should consider a multi-employer approach to bring workplace literacy education to their worksites—particularly when they already have ties through a labor organization.

Small companies are known to be the least likely to provide formal training or education. But a multi-employer resource, such as the Local 32 Fund, can be the vehicle to bring literacy education to smaller workplaces. A union that has relationships with several small to medium-size employers can be the catalyst to bring them together to deal with education issues.

(2) Industry leaders in a multi-employer program need to use their influence to encourage support from diverse companies.

In SET's multi-employer education program, strong leadership by industry pacesetters was important in bringing along other employers that were initially reluctant to participate. Larger employers in the Fund helped influence the participation of smaller ones.

(3) Communications with all employers should be given a high priority in a multi-company program.

Responsibilities for communicating program goals and organizational responsibilities should be defined at the beginning of the program. This includes communication *between* companies—to ensure that each employer's top management is informed about the program and understands their firm's commitment and responsibilities. It also may include communications *within* companies—particularly when companies have scattered sites or separate regional operations—to ensure that all managers understand the corporate commitment and their own roles in the program.

(4) Smaller employers may require special forms of communication to enlist their support.

As seen by the differing levels of participation in SET by larger versus smaller employers, the communications that worked effectively with larger employers did not appear to be as effective with smaller ones. Specially focused

communications could help to broaden the active involvement of smaller companies.

(5) SET's lessons on forming labor-management educational partnerships can apply in single employer situations as well.

Employee benefits trusts like Local 32's Fund are usually established by a union and multiple employers. But the roles developed for the Fund as SET's workplace partner would be equally valid in a joint program involving a single employer and its union (or unions). Instead of working through a joint employee benefits fund or training trust, the partners in a single-employer situation have other options they can consider. A joint committee established for an existing training or safety program, for example, might be the starting point for labor-management cooperation in workplace literacy.

Joint Trusts as Program Operators

SET's experience provides lessons about the role that joint labor-management trust funds can play in the delivery of education programs:

(1) In workplaces where a joint employee benefits trust has been established, employers and unions should consider using the joint trust as a vehicle for providing workplace literacy education.

As SET's experience showed, joint trusts contribute two important organizational ingredients for a workplace-based education effort. First, their joint governing structure ensures that workers and employers are equally and actively involved in carrying out the program. Second, the laws under which these trusts operate ensure that their emphasis is squarely on workers' interests. That emphasis is consistent with the worker-centered focus of workplace literacy programs. Employers and unions that are planning an educational program should look at their employee benefits trust as a potential operator of the program.

(2) Programs run by joint benefit funds have special planning needs.

Employee benefit funds operate under by-laws and statutes that are designed to protect the money they administer but that can also affect how the fund participates in other programs. Members of an employee benefits fund who intend to establish a workplace literacy program should discuss their ideas about

the program with their fund's administrator or attorney. That early planning will help ensure that the new program conforms with the laws that affect how the joint fund conducts business.

Likewise, trustees of a joint fund should plan for the financial management needs of their literacy program. An education program's accounting needs are not likely to be complex, but the joint fund's accounting system may not currently be set up to handle them (for example, if the fund has not administered its own payroll). Trustees should work with the fund administrator in planning the accounting system for the education project.

C. Federal Technical Assistance

The lessons learned from SET suggest three areas of technical assistance that might be provided by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Vocational and Adult Education in its administration and oversight of the National Workplace Literacy Program. These suggestions are the following:

(1) Provide assistance to NWLP grantees in assessing the key components of a workplace literacy program.

An important aspect of the NWLP as a national demonstration program is the identification of the programmatic activities, or components, which are critical to the success of the program. If the experience of the SET staff is like that of other NWLP grantees, most grantee efforts have been focused on implementation rather than on the systematic identification of the programmatic conditions that lead to learners' acquisition and application of skills. It is probable that most grantees would benefit from assistance in designing evaluations that would produce information concerning key program components.

(2) Identify strategies for institutionalizing either the key components or an entire workplace literacy program.

As grantees face the challenge of continuing their workplace literacy program beyond the grant period, they could benefit from assistance in strategies to use in working with their grant partners to assure that some component of the program is ongoing. Examples of successful efforts in institutionalization could be documented, analyzed, and discussed with NWLP grantees.

(3) Provide information about methods for assessing the impact of a workplace literacy program on the productivity of the workplace.

While a major goal of the NWLP is to enhance the productivity of the workplace, few grantees have been able to document their programs' effects in achieving this outcome. Factors such as the length of the instructional program and the difficulty of measuring workplace outcomes that can be attributed directly to learners' skill improvement have accounted for this lack of documentation. Further work is needed in identifying appropriate productivity outcomes and feasible methods for assessing these outcomes.

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APPENDIX A

Members of the Fund

Members of the Fund

The Food and Beverage Workers Union Local 32 & Employers Benefits Fund is an employee benefits trust created by the union and companies through collective bargaining.

On the labor side, the Fund represents the 3,000 members of Food and Beverage Workers Union Local 32. The union is an affiliate of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union, AFL-CIO. Although primarily Washington-based, Local 32 has an expanding membership in Virginia, including the cities of Richmond, Norfolk, and Williamsburg.

On the management side, the joint Fund represents private companies that contract with government agencies, museums, private universities, and other large institutions to operate cafeterias, dining rooms, and snack bars that serve over one million patrons a month. At many of these agencies and institutions, the food service companies operate multiple cafeterias and lunchrooms. The member companies and the sites they served during the grant period were as follows:

ARA Services, Inc.

Pentagon/Naval Annex
Library of Congress
AFL-CIO Headquarters
Fannie Mae
Navy Yard Buildings
U.S. Postal Service
United Brotherhood of Carpenters
Intl. Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Naval Research Lab
Labor Studies Center
Commerce Department

Canteen Corporation

Agriculture Department
J. Edgar Hoover Building
Internal Revenue Service
Prince George's Community College
Bolling Air Force Base
Brentwood Post Office
Geological Survey
Washington Navy Yard Bldg.
Old Executive Office Bldg.
Office of Personnel Mgt.
Union Labor Life Ins. Co.
Department of Justice
Goddard Space Flight Center

DAKA Food Service Management, Inc.

U.S. Bureau of Engraving
Howard University
Washington Area Metro. Transit Authority Bldg.
Gallaudet University

Gardner Merchant

American Security Bank (starting 5/91)

Guest Services, Inc.

Natl. Institutes of Health
Air and Space Museum, Smithsonian Institution
Labor Department
Census Bureau
Central Intelligence Agency
Park Services
Natl. Bureau of Standards
Washington Monument Lodge
Department of Housing and Urban Development
National Gallery of Art

State Department	General Accounting Office	Department of Interior
Natl. Education Association	National Shrine	Souvenir Shops

Harbor Square Condominiums
Harbor Square

Macro Service Systems, Inc.
Ft. McNair

Marriott Corporation		
American University	George Washington University	Georgetown Laundry Service

Ogden Allied Food Service		
Dulles Airport Inflight Food Service	U.S. Naval Gun Factory	American Security Bank (to 5/91)

Refractory Cafeteria Ltd.
Government Printing Office

Seilers Dining Service Management	
Trinity College	Catholic University (until 1991)

Service America Corporation		
Energy Department	ICC Customs	Forrestal Building
New Executive Office Building	Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation	Group Health Insurance
U.S. House of Representatives (until 8/91)	Federal Aviation Admin.	Federal Trade Commission

Twenty-One Hundred Corporation (formerly Carlson's Food)	
2100 2nd Street	1900 Half Street

Two other food service contractors joined the Fund toward the end of the grant period and did not participate in the program: Morrison's Custom Management, which took over the food services at Catholic University, and the House Administration Committee, which assumed the food operations at the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Fund is governed by a board of five union and four employer trustees. Its chairman during the grant period was the president of Local 32. Its secretary was the vice president for human resources at Guest Services, Inc., during the first year of the grant, and then the position was assumed by the director of labor relations at Service America Corporation. These two officers also comprised the Fund's Subcommittee on SET, with responsibility for overseeing the activities of the workplace literacy program. Other board members in 1991 included the staff director, Local 32; general vice president, Local 32; retired trustee, Local 32; general manager, Pentagon unit, ARA Services; district manager/dining services, Canteen Corporation; and vice president for human resources, Guest Services.

APPENDIX B

Job Classifications

Job Classifications

The following sample job classifications at a typical cafeteria worksite illustrate the kinds of positions and the possible career progressions available for the Food and Beverage Workers served by SET.

Cafeteria Positions

Head Baker
Working Purchasing Supervisor
Master Cook
First Cook
Second Cook
Second Cook/Pizza Maker
Grill Cook

Baker
Baker's Helper
Head Catering Prep.
Head Salad Maker
Meat Slicer (Full-Time)
Sandwich/Salad Maker
Line Attendant

Working Supervisor
Storeroom Supervisor
Cashier

Truck Driver

Ice Cream & Dessert Employee
General Service Employee
Line Attendant

University Club Positions

Working Chef
Head Bartender
Public Bartender
Waitress/Waiter

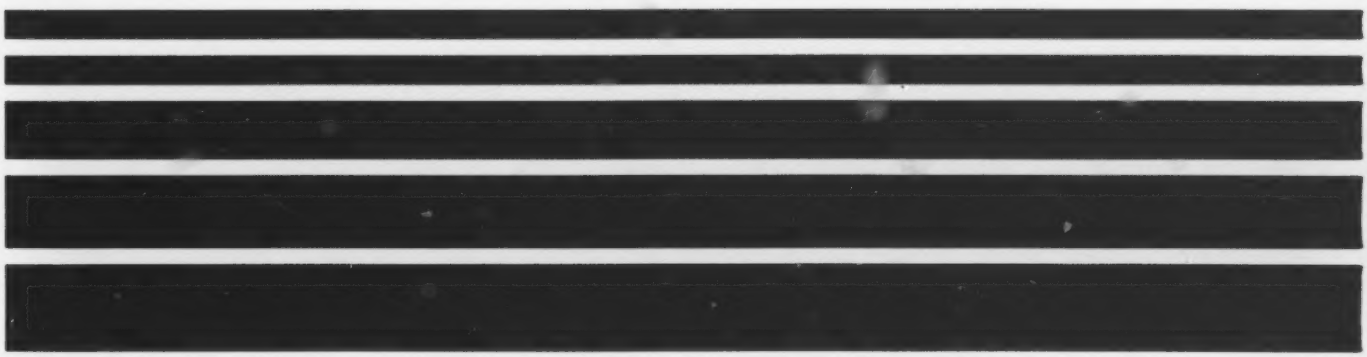
General Services
Dishwashing

Storeroom

Salads
Sandwich
P.M. Wait Staff

Head of General Services

(Marriott Corporation at George Washington University)



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